

Friday, October 17, 1998

Kate Winslet announces engagement

LONDON (AP) — "Titanic" star Kate Winslet has announced her engagement to her boyfriend, actor Jim Threapleton. The 25-year-old actress said she was engaged to the 30-year-old actor on Friday. Winslet said she and Threapleton had been dating for a year. The couple met on the set of the movie "Titanic". Winslet said she was "very happy" to be engaged. Threapleton said he was "very lucky" to be engaged to Winslet. The couple plan to get married in the summer of 1999.

U.S. men prefer money to sex

CHICAGO (AP) — Men in the U.S. are more likely to prefer money to sex, according to a poll released on Friday. The poll, conducted by Playboy magazine, found that 60 percent of men aged 18 and older would prefer a million dollars to sex. The poll also found that 40 percent of men would prefer sex to a million dollars.

French men rush on Viagra

PARIS (AP) — French men are rushing to buy the new drug Viagra, which is used to treat erectile dysfunction. The drug, which was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in June, is now available in France. French men are reportedly buying the drug in large quantities, and some are reportedly taking it without a prescription.

Ex-Spice Girl signs record deal

LONDON (AP) — Ex-Spice Girl Mel B has signed a record deal with Atlantic Records. Mel B, who was a member of the Spice Girls, is set to release her first solo album in 1999. The album is expected to be titled "The Mel B Album".

Uruguayan wins Spanish literature prize

BARCELONA (AP) — Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano has won the prestigious Spanish literature prize, the Premio Planeta. Galeano, who is 65 years old, is the first Uruguayan to win the prize. He was awarded the prize for his book "The Memory of Fire".

Algiers university teachers strike for higher wages

ALGIERS (R) — Lecturers at Algiers's main Bab Ezzouar university went on strike on Saturday to press for higher wages, state-run radio said. The strike, which has nearly paralysed Bab Ezzouar university, has more than 24,000 students, the radio quoted a union official. A union official told the radio the strikers wanted the authorities to raise lecturers' wages and provide more state funds to buy books and upgrade university buildings. "A university where there is no more documentation and books and it rains in the lecture halls when the weather turns bad is not the kind of university we want," he said. The strike was unevenly supported in other universities in Algeria, officials said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الرأي»

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GCC leaders to meet in December in UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The leaders of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states will meet in Abu Dhabi from Dec. 7 to 9, the official Emirati news agency WAM said Saturday. The foreign ministers of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will meet Nov. 14 to hammer out the agenda of the December meeting, WAM said. On the sidelines of their summit, the GCC leaders are expected to meet South African President Nelson Mandela during his scheduled visit to the UAE. It will be the fourth GCC summit in Abu Dhabi since the creation of the body in 1981. Last year's summit was in Kuwait.

Clinton attempts to prod slow-moving Middle East summit

WYE MILLS (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton flew into the Mideast peace talks near here Saturday in hopes of prodding Israeli and Palestinian leaders to speed up lagging negotiations on a long-overdue new peace accord.

With U.S. mediators saying they want to seal a new land-for-security pact by Sunday, Clinton cut short a campaign tour in the U.S. Midwest to hold separate talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

He flew by helicopter from the White House to the summit site at the remote Wye River conference centre in eastern Maryland, where U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and her team of mediators were to brief him on the state of negotiations, they said.

Clinton was then to meet with Arafat and later with Netanyahu for what U.S. officials described as informal talks.

Formal negotiations had been suspended during the Jewish Sabbath from Sunday Friday to Sunday Saturday.

"Clinton-Arafat-Netanyahu meeting could take place, but was not currently planned, the officials said.

Clinton, who launched the summit Thursday but then left Albright to handle the mediation, decided to intervene again amid signs that little progress had been made during the first two days of talks.

The negotiations centre on a U.S. proposal for Israel to withdraw in stages from more of the occupied West Bank in exchange for specific Palestinian actions to halt attacks on Israelis by radical militants.

Also involved in the package are a series of issues left over from earlier interim peace accords, such as Israel's conditions for authorising the opening of a Palestinian airport and a transportation corridor for Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Negotiations on the package have dragged on for more than a year.

If a deal can be finally reached, Israelis and Palestinians would then launch so-called final status negotiations on the final borders and nature of the Palestinian entity.

Arafat and Netanyahu met twice Friday and four committees dealing with the so-called interim issues also held discussions, but Israeli and Palestinian officials, giving out snippets of information despite a U.S.-ordered news blackout, reported little significant progress.

"Nothing has moved," lamented one Israeli official after Friday's summit talks, while a member of the Palestinian delegation said, "Netanyahu has simply repeated the same old positions."

Israel Radio said Netanyahu gave a slightly more upbeat account in a phone call to his defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, saying "some progress" had been made in the talks.

Palestinian officials said Netanyahu had taken a hard line on the security steps he insists be taken before any more land transfers, notably reiterating a demand that Arafat turn over to Israel some 30 militants accused of killing Israelis.

U.S. officials drafted a compromise under which they would forward a list of wanted militants to the Palestinians, who would then prosecute and jail them, but the Palestinians rejected the formula, Palestinian sources said.

Other unresolved disputes include the total scope of two rounds of Israeli pullbacks from the West Bank which are required under earlier peace accords and Palestinian demands, backed by Washington, for a halt to building of Jewish settlements in the disputed territories, officials said.

The Palestinians said they believed Netanyahu was taking a tough stance as a prelude to starting real negotiations following Clinton's latest intervention and the arrival late Saturday of Israel's new foreign minister, Ariel Sharon.

The leading hawk in Netanyahu's cabinet, Sharon is seen as the key to reaching a security agreement and then selling the overall deal to far-right nationalists who dominate Israel's fragile ruling coalition.

According to a senior Palestinian official, Clinton bluntly told Arafat and Netanyahu in a private meeting Thursday that they had until Tuesday to come up with an agreement and that it was an "all or nothing proposition."

"There can be no more delays and no half solutions," Clinton was quoted as saying.



President Clinton arrives at the Wye River Plantation on Saturday for continuing peace talks between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat (Reuters photo)

Arab League urges U.S. not to forget peace process with Syria, Lebanon

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League urged Washington Saturday not to forget the deadlocked Syrian and Lebanese tracks of the Middle East peace process as it hosts a marathon summit to push for a new agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The Arab League is happy to see the United States resume its role as principal sponsor of the peace process by hosting the Wye Plantation summit to try to break the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian talks," league official Ahmed Ben Hellil said.

But the league wants to see Washington "work equally for the resumption of talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks which have been frozen for more than two years," he said.

Peace negotiations between Israel and Syria started in 1991 at the Madrid conference but talks have been stalled since February 1996.

Syria insists they can only resume when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu respects verbal undertakings given by his Labour predecessors to withdraw from the Golan Heights which Israel has occupied since 1967 in exchange for peace.

But Netanyahu insists that he is not bound by the verbal undertakings given by Shimon Peres and the late Yitzhak Rabin and that the talks must start "unconditionally."

U.S. may offer more aid to solidify Mideast deal

WYE MILLS (R) — The United States may offer new aid to Israel and the Palestinians to help solidify any peace agreement that emerges from their Middle East summit, U.S. officials and other experts said on Saturday.

But getting a package through the Republican-led U.S. Congress, despite strong support there for Israel, could be difficult, they said.

The extent and form of possible U.S. aid was unclear, but one official said new aid for Israel would probably be military in nature whereas for Palestinians it would be economic.

Officials were being cautious as President Clinton joined Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat at the secluded Wye River Conference Centre in rural Maryland for an intensive weekend push to forge a long-delayed land and security pact.

"If we can get an agreement, we would love to take on those kinds of issues. But first we have to get a deal," one administration official said who asked about new U.S. aid.

Another official said the issue of how much a set-

dlement would cost in aid would probably come up in the final stages of the talks, if they made progress.

A third official said: "We're looking for some sweeteners for both."

But he added that the issue had been dealt with "only cursorily so far" because the two sides were preoccupied with the core elements — withdrawal of Israeli troops from a further 13 per cent of the West Bank and Israeli demands for specific Palestinian commitments to crack down on hardline Islamist groups.

U.S. assistance was crucial to the 1979 peace agreement between Israel and Egypt and now totals about \$3 billion a year for Israel and \$2 billion a year for Egypt.

Palestinian self-ruled areas in Gaza and the West Bank, where jobs are few and incomes low, are desperate for economic development and assistance.

A Palestinian-operated industrial park at Erez, debated with Israel for three years, now looks to open in December. But it needs investors.

If Israel withdrew from the additional 13 per cent of the West Bank, it would need help in paying for the security consequences, a senior U.S. official said.

Israelis have spoken of needing upwards of \$1 billion to implement an interim accord but one U.S. official called such a figure "baloney" and others said a more realistic figure might be half that amount.

Israel's economy is in much better shape now than in 1979 and Netanyahu last year announced his desire to wean Israel off U.S. economic aid and shift some of it to military assistance.

A Republican aide said Congress — which is still making last-minute budget deals — has begun that process. Some aid had been shifted from economic to military, resulting in a net reduction for 1998-99, he said. He did not have exact figures.

Palestinians have received \$75 million annually from the United States since the 1993 Oslo Accord was signed. Europe pays more but the total is still far short of what Israel gets from Washington.

The congressional aide said he had heard no talk of any new aid for Israel or the Palestinians connected to a peace agreement.

(Continued on page 12)

Government floats \$700m Disi water project

By Ghadeer Taher and Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Jordan will solicit international firms by year end to pre-qualify for a \$700 million project on a build operate and transfer (BOT) basis to draw water from the Disi aquifer and pump it to Amman.

Water Minister Hani Mulki, painting a bleak picture of the state of the country's water resources, told 51 firms attending an orientation seminar Saturday that the Kingdom is seeking to appoint a "consortium to finance, construct and manage the Disi project in a joint venture arrangement with a Jordanian public shareholding company."

According to a timetable proposed by the ministry, the tendering process should be completed by 1999 and construction could begin by the year 2000.

The Disi-Amman conveyance system, with a project life of 50 years will be transferred to the government after 20 years. It will entail drilling wells, building a pumping station and a 325-kilometre water pipeline from Disi in the south of the country that will deliver 100 million cubic metres (mcm) a year to the capital by the year 2005.

A recent government report issued in July said Jordan will run out of freshwater resources by that time, and there will be no more confirmed water resources within the country's borders to develop.

"The project is feasible in terms of our water needs but high in terms of cost," the ministry's Secretary General Kousai Quteishat told local and foreign companies. "Facts are simple and sad: the next major project (Disi-Amman) for provision of water supply is likely to be more expensive."

The Water Authority today sells the precious resource to Jordanians at a subsidised rate. The average cost of a cubic metre is JD 0.84; it is sold to consumers at nearly half that amount, JD 0.45.

But Jordan, with its rapid population growth rate of 3.5 per cent, and rising demand for water, both for domestic and industrial use, has very little choice.

"Despite the huge investment in the water sector, a considerable water deficit will still be facing Jordan," said Mulki. He said the country's water deficit is projected to grow to 250 mcm by the year 2010 from 220 mcm in 1995.

According to Mulki, who also holds the energy portfolio in the government, current deficits are being covered through the "mining" of groundwater resources, some non-renewable, at over 200 per cent of their safe yields.

But for the government, the fossil waters of the Disi aquifer could be the best course considering that desalination of brackish water could raise the cost of freshwater production by as much as three fold — an unattractive alternative for a debt-burdened country with few natural resources.

Using a slide projector and a multitude of charts and studies, the ministry's Assistant Secretary General Hazim Nasser, tried to convince the participants of the well-attended seminar of the proposed project's feasibility.

"All our studies indicate that this project is feasible," said Nasser. "We will be looking at a crisis in Amman within the next 10 years if we do not tap additional water resources."

(Continued on page 12)

Syria and Turkey to meet over PKK — report

CAIRO (AFP) — Syria and Turkey are to hold their first meeting to discuss security issues Monday in the wake of a mounting war of words over alleged Syrian support for the rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), it was reported here Saturday.

"Security officials from both countries will attend the meeting, which will consider the issue of the PKK and the cessation of its activities in Syria, in the light of Turkish requests and Syria's favourable response to those requests," the Egyptian news agency MENA said.

Discussions will also take place on "the means of re-establishing trust between the two nations as well as the reopening of joint security committees," it said, adding that the meetings are to be held successively in Damascus and Ankara.

"If these talks succeed, meetings will then be held between Syria and Turkey, and there should be measures to that end in the coming hours or days," Mubarak said on Wednesday.

But a source close to the Turkish government said that President Suleyman Demirel planned to deliver a speech in the border province of Hatay on Monday strongly reiterating Ankara's demands.

"Mr. Demirel will speak to the residents of Hatay and deliver a message to the Syrian government about Turkey's determination to see its demands met," the source told AFP in Ankara.

Ankara accuses Damascus of supporting the PKK and harbouring its leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and has threatened military action unless it stops supporting terrorism.

The PKK has been engaged in a rebellion in the mainly Kurdish southeast of Turkey since 1984, and some 31,000 people have died in the fighting.

Turkish Defence Minister Ismet Sezgin said Tuesday that Syria appeared to have closed down PKK camps and was probably no longer sheltering Ocalan, but Turkish officials later said this was Syria's claim and had not been officially confirmed.

Iraq calls for measures against 'spying' U.N. inspectors

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on Saturday warned that unless the United Nations stopped its weapons inspectors "spying" it would "take measures to protect its security."

In an open letter to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan published in local newspapers, Aziz called for an investigation into links between U.N. weapons inspectors, the United States and Israel.

The letter was formally given to Annan by Iraq's U.N. Ambassador Nizar Hamdoun, the newspapers said.

It follows revelations by former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter that the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with dismantling Iraq had been aided by Israel and that the United States had repeatedly tried to intervene in inspections.

Aziz denounced "the actions of members of UNSCOM... which threaten Iraq's security and sovereignty and uses the U.N. resolutions as a cover for spying activities which have nothing to do with the work of UNSCOM."

The deputy prime minister said UNSCOM teams had been making enquiries into Iraq's "vital activities or strategic installations."

He said that in June 1998 an American-led team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had asked for detailed information on all Iraq's water resources and had renewed the request in September.

In July, the American head of an UNSCOM team surreptitiously took pictures of a train carrying military equipment, Aziz said.

In August, an UNSCOM chemicals team asked for detailed information on those employed in the government's agricultural protection department, he added.

"These actions are not isolated incidents but are linked to relations between UNSCOM, certain members of the IAEA and groups hostile to Iraq," the deputy prime minister said.

"I demand, as well as the opening of an official enquiry into UNSCOM's actions, that you take the necessary measures with regard to UNSCOM members who carry out such actions which threaten Iraq's security and sovereignty," Aziz said.

"Otherwise, Iraq will be forced to take the measures necessary to protect her security and sovereignty," he warned.

Baghdad suspended its cooperation on Aug. 5, saying U.N. weapons inspectors would never certify Iraq as having dismantled its weapons of mass destruction.

That decision prompted the United Nations to suspend indefinitely its twice-yearly reviews of the sanctions imposed on Baghdad following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Under Security Council resolutions adopted after the 1991 Gulf war, the sanctions can only be lifted when U.N. inspectors have certified Iraq is free of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

U.S. broadens accusation against suspected Ben Laden aide — report

BONN (AFP) — U.S. authorities have broadened the scope of accusations against a suspected aide of Saudi millionaire and alleged activist Osama Ben Laden held in German custody, the weekly Der Spiegel, which comes out on Monday, said.

The U.S. initially accused Mamdouh Mahmoud Salim of conspiracy to murder American citizens and using weapons of mass destruction, but this has been broadened to include transporting explosives and attacking military installations, the magazine said.

The charges are linked to accusations that Sudanese-born Salim is a close aide of Ben Laden, whom the U.S. accused of masterminding the bombings of its

embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in September, which killed 258 people.

Der Spiegel said that the two new charges were based on vague statements given by an informer for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), whom police have codenamed CS-1.

The informer was said to have been a member of Ben Laden's entourage and to have been friends with Salim, the weekly said.

Der Spiegel said that German authorities, who will have to consider extraditing Salim to the U.S., viewed the accusations as based on weak arguments.

U.S. officials put out an arrest warrant through the international police group Interpol as part of an

investigation into the embassy bombings. Salim, 40, was arrested Sept. 16 by a special police squad in Gruenbeck in southern Germany and detained awaiting extradition.

Another Germany weekly, Focus, reported that the U.S. had asked German authorities Oct. 3 to grant it another 20 days to file the extradition request to allow more time to gather hard evidence to support their claim.

Germany originally gave the U.S. 40 days to file its extradition request.

Salim's lawyer Steffen Ufer told Focus that the U.S. was exerting heavy political pressure on the German authorities and dismissed the accusations as "ridiculous."

Mural of would-be Rushdie assassin painted on Tehran wall

TEHRAN (AFP) — A mural of a Muslim man said to have been killed while trying to murder British author Salman Rushdie has been painted on a wall in Tehran.

The painting was unveiled by Islamist groups on Friday in Tehran's northern Gandhi district in memory of Mostafa Mazouh, of Guinean origin, who is said to have "fallen martyr" in London while trying to execute a death fatwa or religious decree against Rushdie.

His portrait appears alongside one of Iran's late supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who issued the fatwa in 1989 condemning Rushdie to death for his novel "The Satanic Verses," deemed blasphemous by many Muslims.

"Mostafa Mazouh fell martyr at the age of 21 in a suicide operation against apostate Rushdie in London," reads a sentence at the bottom of the painting, undersigned by the "Iranian and Lebanese Hizbollah."

There have been no reports in Iran or abroad of any person killed in the line of a mission to kill Rushdie, who has virtually been living in hiding under tight security since the fatwa was pronounced against him.

Agency says Sudan relief workers killed in Uganda ambush

NAIROBI (R) — The Norwegian People's Aid agency said on Saturday that three of its staff had been killed in northern Uganda on Thursday in an attack on an aid convoy returning from southern Sudan.

Two trucks in the convoy came under heavy gunfire 20 kilometres from the town of Koboko, and the three aid workers, all Sudanese, were killed on the spot, NPA spokesman Dan Eiffe said in a statement.

The attackers burnt a lorry and a four-wheel-drive vehicle after looting their contents, the statement added.

Eiffe said the road on which the attack took place was crucial for the delivery of relief supplies to over 100,000 displaced people in the southern Sudanese province of Western Equatoria.

"The area of attack is regularly insecure with

landmines and occasional ambushes," he said.

"The motive for such attacks is to hamper humanitarian work and... prevent normal life returning to Western Equatoria, which has been one of the most stable areas under SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Army] control in the south," the mainly Christian rebels of the SPLA have been fighting the Islamic government in Khartoum for 15 years.

The NPA statement said local reports suggested that troops from the West Nile Bank Front, a faction loyal to the Sudanese government, were responsible for the ambush. It said the Ugandan army was pursuing the attackers.

NPA works outside an agreement between the United Nations and Khartoum which allows aid agencies to work in Sudan. NPA only operates in rebel-held areas of the south.



PROTEST FOR PRISONERS' RELEASE: A Palestinian youth Saturday holds a flag in one hand and throws a stone with the other during a protest in Ramallah to demand the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails (Reuters photo)

Tarawneh meets with American, Norwegian firms' representatives

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government is seeking to help Jordan's mining companies acquire modern technology to increase production, particularly in phosphates and potash, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said Saturday.

Speaking at a meeting with representatives of the U.S. Albemarle firm, which on Thursday signed a \$120 million deal with the Jordan Dead Sea Industries Company (JODICO) for a bromine production complex at the Dead Sea, Tarawneh said Jordan attaches great importance to the mining industry, which he described as the backbone of

the national economy. Tarawneh called on the country's mining companies to acquire modern technology to increase exports.

The JODICO-Albemarle deal, a 50-50 revenue-sharing venture, is expected to bring in \$100 million in revenues annually from the production of bromine, calcium bromide and other products.

Also Saturday, Tarawneh met with a team representing the Norwegian Norsk Hydro company, which last August signed an agreement with the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company to establish a phosphate project with a \$600 million capital, making it one of

the country's largest. The venture is expected to produce 440,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid and 1.2 million tonnes of fertilisers annually.

Tarawneh said the government will provide full support to the Arab Potash Company and the Social Security Corporation, which are involved in the project with the Norwegian company.

The representatives of the two firms pledged to take measures to help develop the southern regions of the country, the location of the projects, in response to a call by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

'Israeli Arab MKs will support any peace accord'

CAIRO (AP) — Arab legislators in Israel's parliament will support any agreement that emerges from ongoing talks between Yasser Arafat and Benjamin Netanyahu, a leading Israeli Arab politician said Saturday.

But Abdul Wahab Darawshe of the Arab Democratic Party indicated that the support may not amount to much, saying it is doubtful Prime Minister Netanyahu will implement a future agreement.

"We have faith in the Palestinian National Authority and will support their decisions" in Israel's parliament, Knesset, Darawshe said.

"But I do not have faith in Netanyahu and [Foreign Minister Ariel] Sharon's readiness to implement any agreement signed with the Arabs," he added.

Darawshe was speaking to reporters after he and other Arab lawmakers from Israel met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to discuss the role of Israeli Arabs in expediting the peace process.

Arafat and Netanyahu are holding intense discussions in a secluded retreat in

Maryland in the hopes of reaching a West Bank accord that will include a crucial anti-Islamist agreement.

Darawshe criticised the expected agreement, saying it "is less than what the Palestinians ask for."

"But given the current situation... there are no options before Arafat but to sign this agreement," Darawshe said.

Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa have also expressed concern that Arafat has been pressured into making too many concessions in the U.S.-brokered negotiations.

Darawshe said his talks with Mubarak and Musa focused on bolstering the Israeli-Arab role in the Knesset and "influencing the Israeli government to implement the agreements" with the Palestinians.

There are about 1 million Arabs in Israel, making up about 18 per cent of the country's population. The 120-member Knesset has 11 Arabs — eight Muslims, two Christians and one Druze — representing Arab and other opposition parties.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King sends messages to Qaboos, Laboud

ROCHESTER (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday sent a message to Sultan Qaboos Ben Sa'id of Oman congratulating him on winning an international peace prize. King Hussein wished Sultan Qaboos continued good health and a happy life and the Omani people further progress and development. King Hussein also sent message of congratulations to new Lebanese President Emile Lahoud.

Regent receives British general

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday received British Chief of Defence Staff Lieutenant General Charles Guthrie. Attending the audience were Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah and Prince Talal. Eadler, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafeez Mirza Kaabneh received the British general and discussed recent developments in the region and issues of common concern.

Cabinet approves land allocation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Saturday approved the allocation of 500 dunams of land in the Jordan Valley region to be used as a free trade zone area. The free trade zone, to be set up near Sheikh Hussein Bridge, will solely employ Jordanians. The Cabinet also withdrew a decision to retire Karak District Governor Othman Ebeidat, who appealed to the Higher Court of Justice over the decision.

Medical conference opens

AMMAN (Petra) — Around 200 delegates from 12 Arab countries Saturday opened the first medical conference organised by the University of Jordan's Faculty of Medicine and the Arab-German Medical Society. Addressing the opening session, HRH Prince Ra'ed Ben Zaid said a major item on the agenda is the primary health care services. Prince Ra'ed said that the event offers a chance for building bridges of cooperation between Arab and German physicians and medical institutions for the benefit of the two peoples. The conference was organised to mark the University of Jordan Faculty of Medicine's 25th anniversary and the creation of the Arab-German Medical Society in 1994.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 15:10 Cartoon — The Pink Panther
- 15:20 Cartoon — The Pumpkin Patch
- 15:30 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
- 16:00 Discover the World of Animals
- 16:30 Vid Kids
- 17:00 N.B.A.
- 18:00 Drama — Bonne Esperance
- 19:00 Le Journal
- 19:15 French Programme — Science Magazine (E-M6)
- 19:30 News Headlines
- 19:35 Comedy — The Britus Empire
- 20:00 Today's Environment — Secrets of Science
- 20:30 Drama — Renegade
- 21:05 Farming and Ecology
- 21:30 Behind the Scene
- 22:00 News in English
- 22:30 Mini-series — Veronica Clare (pt. 1)
- 23:30 Dodge Howser (Ep. 3)
- 23:59 End of T. X.

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:19 Fajr
- 05:37 (Sunrise) Dhuha
- 11:21 Dhuhr
- 14:34 'Asr
- 17:05 Maghreb
- 18:22 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Swefieh, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4634590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4623666

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811

St. Adrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751

Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Swefieh Tel. 5920146

The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly but remaining slightly below average. Clouds will appear at low altitudes and winds north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman 15/26

Aqaba 21/32

Deserts 13/28

Jordan Valley 20/31

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 23, Aqaba 30 Humidity

readings: Amman 45 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 21

Jerash 26

Um Qays 26

Madaba 26

Petra 27

Dead Sea 34

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Khalil Ramadan 5358723

Dr. Nidal Dahleh 5827195

Dr. Youssef Nasser 4751144

Dr. Hanna Mansour 4750197

Firas pharmacy 5661912

Al Asema pharmacy 4637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 4623672

Al Salam pharmacy 4636730

Yacoub pharmacy 4644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660

Najib pharmacy 5347632

IRBID:

Dr. Issam Al Salih 246858

Al Quds pharmacy 4630341

ZARQA:

Dr. Ratib Atallah 994424

Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 4775121

Highway Police 5343402

Traffic Police 4896390

Public Security Dept 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5605800

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 4637111

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Radio Jordan 4774111

Water Authority 5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199

The Islamic, Abdali 5666131/7

Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5868556

Luzmila 4630195

Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6

Akileh Maternity 4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital 5669131

University Hospital 5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 477101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26

Army, Marka 4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5602340/50

Amal Hospital 5674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09/983323

Zarqa National Hospital 09/990560

Ibn Sina Hospital 09/986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09/990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital 02/275555

Greek Catholic Hospital 02/272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital 02/247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital 03/314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone (44) (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:30 Jeddah (RJ)

08:45 Lamaca (RJ)

09:00 Bombay (RJ)

09:05 Dhabran, Riyadh (RJ)

09:15 Aqaba (add) (RJ)

09:20 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

16:05 Brussels (RJ)

16:30 Madrid (RJ)

16:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:50 London (RJ)

18:10 Athens (RJ)

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

05:30 Lamaca (RJ)

05:30 Paris, Aqaba (add) (RJ)

06:45 Aqaba (add) (RJ)

08:15 Frankfurt (RJ)

11:15 Vienna (RJ)

11:15 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

11:30 Rome (RJ)

11:40 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

12:20 Athens (RJ)

12:25 London (RJ)

20:25 Jeddah (RJ)

20:30 New Delhi (RJ)

20:4

Home News

Queen receives World Monument Fund Award

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor delivered the keynote address Friday at the 68th Annual World Travel Congress of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) in Los Angeles, where she received the World Monument Fund Award for Petra, according to a press release Saturday.

The fund is a global programme created in 1995 that seeks to identify threatened cultural landmarks throughout the world, with a comprehensive approach towards preserving and protecting them. The World Monuments Fund was created in part by a \$5 million donation from the American Express Company to provide financial assistance to selected sites on the List of 100 Most Endangered Sites, the statement said.

In her address, Queen Noor noted that for tourism "to most effectively foster sustained development for the well-being of present and future generations... we must ensure that its economic gains are shared fairly by all concerned — in particular, by the local communities who are the custodians of the natural environment, the guardians of these precious historic sites, mankind's common cultural heritage."

She added that Jordan is implementing a series of protective measures to ensure that its archaeological sites, such as Petra, are not irreparably damaged by increasing pressures from tourist flows and that the local residents are involved in preservation and development planning, which she said will also guarantee an improved quality of life.

The emerging concept of eco-tourism, according to the Queen, has been "invaluable to both the environment and the population of our region."

She added that sustainable eco-tourism can also be combined with the emerging trend of "adventure tourism." The Queen noted that Wadi Rum is now acknowledged as one of the world's foremost desert climbing areas. "The interaction of thousands of tourists with the local bedouin population has been mutually enriching and has enabled our visitors to take home marvellous memories in this place that T.E. Lawrence once called 'Rum the magnificent,'" said the Queen.

Queen Noor warned that for the benefits of tourism to be fully realised, it is crucial that "we achieve comprehensive regional peace." Peace and stability, according to the Queen, are prerequisites for a tourism industry that can enhance economic growth and further reinforce stability. She noted that as a result of progress towards peace in the mid-1990s, the Middle East in general experienced unprecedented growth in tourism, but when it began to stall, tourism also suffered.

In his remarks, American Express President Steve Alessio said his company has "added Jordan to its Eastern Mediterranean tour offerings." Alessio noted that Queen Noor "has dedicated herself to a wide range of programmes that are focused primarily on the conservation of archaeological and natural heritage, the empowerment of women and the promotion of peace through democracy, education and economic development."

Founded in 1931, ASTA has 27,000 members in more than 170 countries, including Jordan. According to the Minister of Tourism Akel Biltaji, the Queen's participation this year has given "Jordan unprecedented coverage and exposure at a meeting of the world's largest, most prestigious association of travel professionals."

Biltaji, Jordanian Ambassador to the U.S. Marwan Muasher, Royal Jordanian President Nader Dahabi and members of the Jordan Tourism Board attended the ASTA convention with the Queen.

Government, professional unions hold first meeting of 'national dialogue' today

Exclusion of agenda topics criticised by unions, IAF

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The government today will hold talks with professional unions' leaders in the first meeting of a national dialogue that has already drawn criticism from two expected major players over the exclusion of controversial topics from its agenda.

The government dialogue committee, headed by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, has been working for the past two weeks on the agenda and timeframe for the dialogue, but union leaders and the country's strongest political party, the Islamic Action Front, yesterday questioned the government's strategy and expressed scepticism that the meeting would achieve any results.

Official statements that amendments to the press and elections laws would not be on the agenda of the projected dialogue cast a shadow over the eve of the meeting between the government and the coun-

try's 13 syndicates, traditionally a hotbed for the opposition.

The Council of Presidents of Professional Associations, representing 80,000 members, declined to issue an official statement after a preparatory meeting yesterday. "In a bid not to spoil the atmosphere ahead of such an important meeting and to give the government the benefit of the doubt,"

But union leaders privately were highly critical of a statement by Interior Minister Nayef Qadi to the Arabic daily Al-Rai' on Saturday that "the press and publications laws will not be subject to discussion during the series of meetings held by the various sub-committees."

"These laws were extensively debated in Parliament and by the various parties before they were endorsed... the press and publications laws have become part and parcel of our lives after they passed through the legislative and legal

process, and we have to respect and adhere to them," Qadi was quoted as saying.

In a press statement issued yesterday, the IAF said it "has been following with interest [the government's initiatives] on the national dialogue, but did not find anything but points raising our concerns, especially statements by the premier on fragmenting the dialogue, and statements by the interior minister scratching the press and elections laws from the agenda."

The IAF warned that the projected dialogue would be "meaningless, unless all representatives of the national conscience contribute to working out the concept, mechanism, contents, and participants in the dialogue."

Describing dialogue along the lines set by the government as "worthless," the IAF asked the Cabinet to freeze all decisions on the issue "until an agreement can be reached."

The government dialogue committee, which includes seven ministers, has established seven sub-committees entrusted with dealing with various public sectors, from the professional and labour unions to women's unions, political parties, and other social and economic activists.

The professional associations and Islamists have led a five-year campaign against the one-person, one-vote system, introduced ahead of the 1993 parliamentary elections, on the grounds that the electoral formula unfairly targets political parties and Islamist candidates.

The opposition also fiercely protested against the controversial press law, endorsed by Parliament in an extraordinary session this summer and described as restrictive by international human rights watchdogs.

The elections law and an allegedly low ceiling of public freedoms were among the reasons cited by the professional unions and the Islamist-led

opposition for their boycott of last November's general elections.

"The government has declared the elections and press laws off limits," the president of one of the country's most influential syndicates told the Jordan Times yesterday.

"This is not a good start. We knew the government would have the upper hand in deciding the agenda and mechanism [for the dialogue]. But we hoped it would have left some room for compromise," he said.

Some centrist and moderate opposition groups have called for a new law to govern the 2001 elections that while retaining the one-person, one-vote system, would also allocate Lower House seats to political parties on a proportional basis. Prior to the government's announcement limiting the agenda, some analysts said such a law could have been a possible outcome of the dialogue.

Father allegedly stabs daughter to death to 'cleanse honour'

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — A 20-year-old woman died in hospital on Saturday hours after police found her in a ditch in Zarqa with several stab wounds, official sources said.

According to the source, Khadijah A. was attacked by her father, who later turned himself in to police claiming he killed his daughter to "cleanse his honour."

Four months ago, Khadijah was reported missing by her family. One week later, police found her and referred her for an examination to determine whether she was still a virgin, a standard procedure in missing-person cases. She was found to be a virgin and released into her father's custody, the source said.

On Saturday, the father took his daughter to a deserted area, stabbed her four times in the chest and slit her throat. "He then went and turned himself in to police, still holding the knife which he said he used to kill his daughter to cleanse his honour," the source said.

The police found her alive and rushed to the nearest hospital, but she died an hour later. According to the source, a medical committee headed by pathologist Mo'men Hadidi will examine the victim today. Khadijah became the 16th woman reportedly killed in a crime of honour since the beginning of the year.

Last year there were 25 "honour killings" reported in the Kingdom.



Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamsar and UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner address the press conference on Saturday (Petra)

High unemployment not sole cause of poverty — Mamsar

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamsar yesterday said scouring unemployment should not be held entirely responsible for growing poverty in the country.

Mamsar, speaking on the occasion of the United Nations' designated International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, said that even if the labour market were able to absorb the entire eligible workforce, the poverty rate would remain more or less the same.

"A very real problem facing Jordan is low wages," said Mamsar. "Salaries are not enough for most workers to cover their basic needs. Even if we were able to employ all the unemployed, we will not be able to end or eradicate poverty completely because of poor wages, which sometimes average JD50-70 [per month]."

Unemployment, estimated officially at 15 per cent but unofficially at 27 per cent, has been a traditional scapegoat when discussing the country's spiralling level of poverty. According to Mamsar, the government estimates that 22.2 per cent of the country's 4.5 million citizens live in absolute poverty, defined as those who are partly dependent on state aid, and an additional 8.8 per cent live in abject poverty, defined as families without an income earner and entirely dependent on state assistance.

But officials, until recently, blamed a "culture of shame" highly reliant on foreign labour to fill menial jobs for escalating unemployment.

"It is not a matter of the 'shame culture'," said Mamsar, but rather a question of why people do or do not work. "It's a question of privileges and benefits — health insurance, transport expenses, social security, job security. People must have these things."

Mamsar was speaking at a press conference with UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner and the head of the UNDP's Poverty Team, Abila Amawi.

Amawi told reporters that officials have to begin addressing the "appalling working conditions" of the labour force. "No one can accept, nor be expected to accept the conditions that foreign labourers are now working in," she said.

"The idea that [Jordan encourages] a culture of shame is an outrage," she said. "If anything, it is a culture of entitlement, not shame. If you look at the situation of Egyptian labourers in the Jordan Valley or those working in the construction sector, it's appalling. There is not the slightest notion of the respect for their human rights in their working condition. No one can accept it."

However, Mamsar said the idea of enforcing a minimum wage — one proposal put forth by the recent national conference on unemployment — had not yet garnered much political support.

"If we raise the minimum wage to JD120, for example," he said, "the price of production would increase, and the poor simply cannot tolerate an increase of prices [on the mar-

ket]."

Mamsar said available job opportunities do not correspond to qualifications of the workforce and criticised the high level of expectations instilled in children by parents regarding their future careers.

"Children are encouraged to be doctors and lawyers and study at [prestigious universities], although opportunities [in Jordan] are limited," he said. "It is wrong to raise our children with unreasonable expectations."

Mamsar also pointed out that Jordan's youth are bearing the brunt of increasing poverty and economic recession.

Among the 11 categories of impoverishment identified by the Ministry of Social Development, children and youth are at the core of five: children from broken homes and orphans; children who commit crime; drug addicts; unemployed youth; and children under the age of 15 used to market and sell narcotics and alcohol.

"Children who are exploited to market drugs are a new category," said Mamsar. "It is not a widespread phenomenon but it is starting to appear in Jordan."

A 10-year social safety net package that has been implemented since last year, he said, is concentrating particularly on children.

Part of the poverty alleviation scheme is a study on the extent of work now being carried out by the ministry in cooperation with UNDP. Mamsar said the results will be released in December.

Prosecution charges five people with Rabia, Shmeisani murders

By Staff Reporter

AMMAN — State prosecutors on Saturday charged five defendants with the murder of 11 people in the Rabia and Shmeisani murders earlier this year.

Four suspects, Mohammad Omar Yousef, 35, Abdullah Mohammad Suleiman, 35, Walid Khalil, 23, and Kayed Mohammad, 42, appeared in court yesterday. The fifth, Ahmad Mahmoud Subeh, 24, will be tried in absentia.

The victims of the Rabia murders were Iraqi Chargé d'Affaires Hikmat Hajoui, 51, his wife Leila Sha'ban, Iraqi businessmen Namin Ochi, 50, Sami George, 43 and Sadeq Sadiq, 43 and two Egyptian employees, Mohammad Hindawi and Shabbour Sayed. A 37-year-old Greek woman, Anastasia Zaki, was the sole survivor of the mass murder.

The April 8 Shmeisani murder victims were prominent lawyer Hanna Nadeh, his son Subail and psychiatrist Awni Sa'ad.

The eleventh victim was Lawy Hajibi, a taxi driver who was said to be an accomplice to the crimes.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, Yousef, who

resided in Iraq until the end of 1997, had rented a restaurant from Ochi and the two became friends.

"Yousef gave Ochi two crystal works of art to sell in Lebanon for \$6,000, but the two had financial disputes, and Ochi took the restaurant from Yousef," the sheet said.

Yousef then made a vow with Suleiman and Khalil, and a fourth man, Jamal Omar Yousef, to kill him because he was a Christian. Jamal Omar Yousef was killed in a shoot-out with authorities on May 25.

Mohammad Omar Yousef later met with Ochi on several occasions in Amman and inquired about the money owed by Ochi, who "informed him that he was expecting a \$70,000 money transfer on Jan. 17."

On that day, the four men headed to the Rabia villa, where Ochi was a guest of Sami George. They asked about Ochi but did not find him, the sheet said.

The suspects tied up George, took him to the second-floor bathroom, stabbed him to death and waited for the other victims. They stabbed and killed them one by one as they arrived at the villa.

The four then searched the

villa for valuables and fled with some gold and electronics equipment.

On April 5, the suspects decided to kill the taxi driver Hajibi because he would not cooperate with them in the murders, the sheet said.

"The suspects took him to a deserted area near Wadi Seer, shot him, took JD50, buried him, then dumped the car in the Abu Nusseir area," according to the charge sheet.

Three days later, the four decided to go after psychiatrist Sa'ad and arranged to visit him at his clinic in Shmeisani.

The men entered Sa'ad's clinic, tied him up, then started questioning him. In the meantime, Hanna Nadeh and his son Subail arrived at the clinic.

"The suspects tied them up and shot them with a silenced gun, took JD300 from Hanna Nadeh and the three victims' mobile phones, and fled the scene," the sheet said.

Fingerprints taken from both crime scenes matched those of Yousef, the prosecution said. The bullets found in the victims' bodies matched the gun that was found with Yousef.

According to a judicial source, the case will be referred to the State Security Court "soon" for trial.

Causes behind outbreak under investigation

By Munther Murjan

AMMAN — Health Ministry officials Saturday said they were still trying to determine the cause of a recent outbreak of diarrhoea, nausea and fever in the northern province of Koura that resulted in the hospitalisation of 117 people.

The patients, from all age groups, checked into hospitals in the tribal governorate over the past five days, and most were discharged in a matter of hours after doctors gave them antibiotics and other medica-

tion. Others spent a day or two at hospitals under medical supervision.

"We still cannot say what caused these symptoms, but indications are that it could be a viral infection," said Mohammad Momani, head of the ministry's Koura Health Department. "But there were three cases of bacterial infection and another case of amoeba infection, which could have been transmitted by food."

The ministry took water samples from the state-run network and found that water supplies

were clean, Momani told the Jordan Times.

However, tests carried out on private domestic water wells — common in many rural areas — found traces of bacteria, prompting officials to launch a week-long campaign to disinfect wells used by many households.

Doctors at several hospitals, who said they regularly deal with such cases, were alarmed by the large number of patients who came from a certain area and were suffering from the same symptoms.

what's going on

FILMS
• "Prenom Camer" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabbal Weibdeh on Monday Oct. 19 at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
• "Goya: El capricho y la invención" (in Spanish with commentary by Dr. Khalid Khreis) at Insituno Cervantes, Jabbal Amman at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 4610858).
PLAY
• "The Road to Safety" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
LECTURE
• "The Policies of Economic Reform in Developing

Countries — Jordan as an Example" by Mithal Agel at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabbal Amman on Monday Oct. 19 at 6:30 p.m.
• "The Inseparable Orientals — The Far East" by Dr. Noha Homaid and Mrs. Anna Oheida at the British Council, Jabbal Amman on Monday Oct. 19 at 5:00 p.m.
• "The Geography of Space" by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullan at Darat Al Fuman, Jabbal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.
JAZZ AND BLUES CONCERT
• "The American Jazz Ambassadors Duo" at Terni

Santa Cultural Centre on Monday Oct. 19 at 8:00 p.m.
THE PALESTINIAN HERITAGE WEEK
• Seminar entitled "The Role of Umm al-Din in the Defence of Al-Aqsa (Mosque)" with the participation of Dr. Muhammad Abu Faris, Dr. Ali Al-Sawa, Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Ali, in addition to Sheikh Hamid Al-Bayawi and Dr. Abdul Majid Al-Zandani (both of whom will participate by phone) at the Professional Associations Complex at 6:00 p.m.
• Popular poetry (in slang Arabic) at the Professional Associations Complex on Monday Oct. 19

(6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.)
EXHIBITIONS
• Display of autumn collection at The Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqin St. until Oct. 31 (Tel. 5699141/2).
• Exhibition of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullan entitled "Homage to Jerusalem," an exhibition of paintings by late Palestinian artist Zulfu Al-Sa'idi, an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Sa'ad Nuseibah entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Darat Al Fuman, Jabbal Weibdeh, until Nov. 12 (Tel. 4643251/2).

Journalists have alleged that legislation on the press is so vague that almost any news item can be construed as being in violation of the press law, and that therefore many cases were personal or political in nature rather than violations of the spirit and letter of the law.

Journalists also interpreted a decision to replace the former PPD director, whom many associate with several of the new law's strictest clauses, with Qattan as a measure of the government's willingness to interpret the law liberally. They also lent support to the suggestion that a Royal Commission on the press be created to eventually establish a mechanism to resolve disputes between the press and the government or private citizens before taking cases to court.

SPD riding high as German coalition talks near end

BONN (R) — Germany's Social Democrats moved into the final stages of government coalition talks with the Greens Party Saturday with their popularity riding high three weeks after their general election triumph.

Negotiators were due to discuss health, social policy and unemployment at talks later — all areas where there is likely to be a broad consensus.

The two parties, who have only had a few minor clashes during the talks, expect to wrap up a coalition pact on Monday setting out an action plan for the next four years.

Chancellor-elect Gerhard Schröder has said he would unveil his full cabinet line-up once the coalition deal is wrapped up.

This could happen Monday, although there is no time limit for the formation of his government.

Assuming the coalition agreement is approved by party delegates at special congresses the following weekend, Schröder will be confirmed as chancellor on Oct. 27.

The smooth progress of

negotiations appears to have been rewarded by a rise in support for the SPD to 44 per cent from 40.9 per cent at September's general election, the Electoral Research Group's monthly Politbarometer poll showed.

Greens support was six per cent, down from 6.7 per cent on election day, according to the poll, published in Saturday's Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

Personal approval ratings for Schröder have also jumped, making him by far Germany's most popular politician, the survey of 1,279 voters showed.

A second poll published in the Bild tabloid also showed support for the SPD was up. But German voters gave a thumbs down to plans agreed by the SPD and Greens for phased cuts in income taxes over the next four years.

Fifty-three per cent of voters said the tax reform would not make any difference to them, 23 per cent said they would end up worse off and just 16 per cent said they would bene-

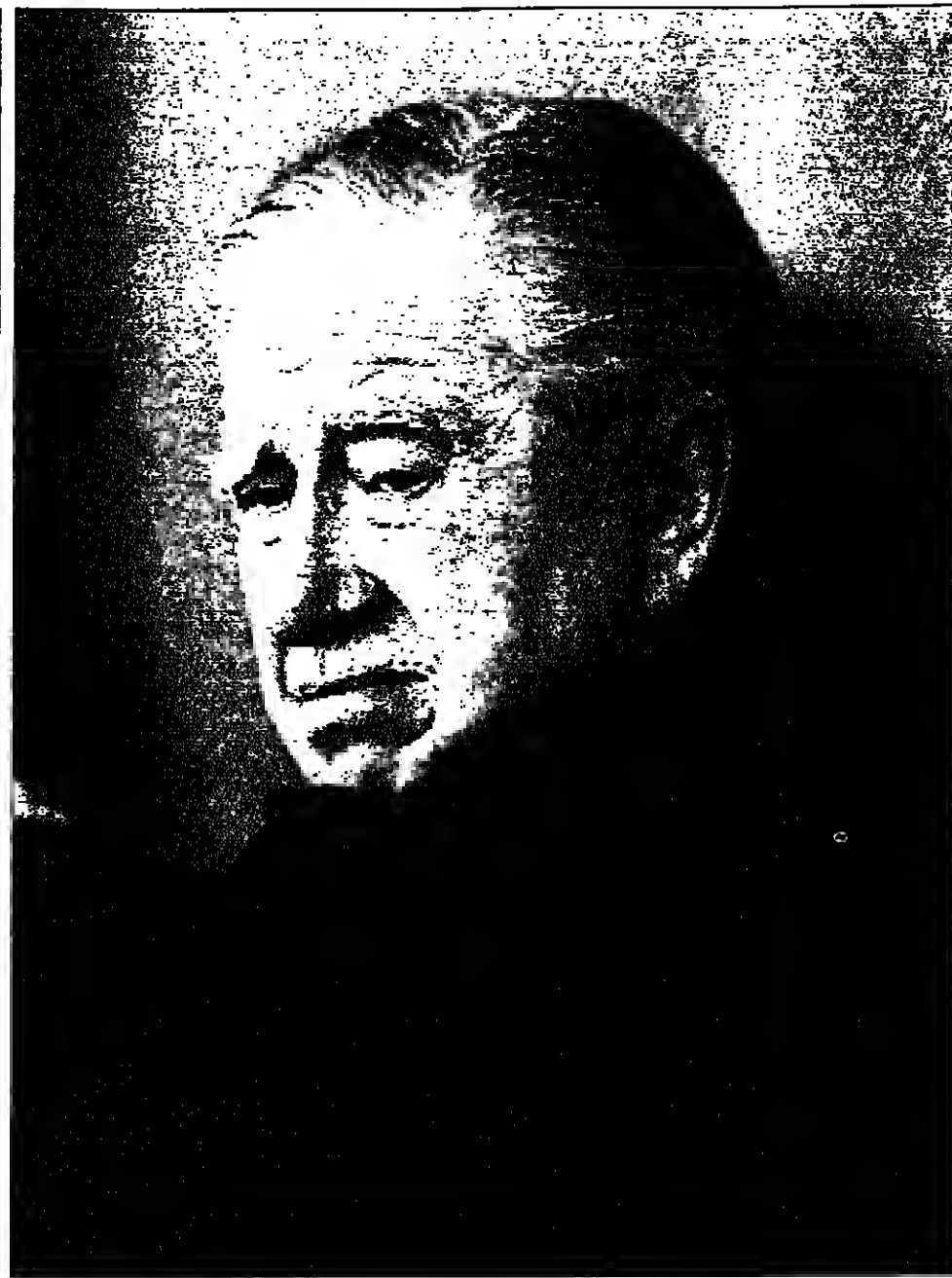
fit the poll of 1,033 voters by the Dimap institute showed.

The two parties agreed late on Friday on environmental, transport and education issues and found broad consensus on agriculture, science and research, according to the SPD's Edelgard Bulmahn, who is tipped to become education minister.

So far they have also agreed to phase out nuclear energy, launch training schemes to reduce unemployment among young people, liberalise Germany's citizenship laws and hammer out a joint foreign and security policy.

But problems remain on the issue of raising energy taxes to finance a cut in Germany's high social security charges — seen by both parties as a tax on jobs.

And party leaders did not rule out on Friday that the government might have to increase federal borrowing next year to cover a financing gap of 20 billion marks (\$12.5 billion) revealed by an emergency audit of the outgoing government's books.



Former Chilean leader Augusto Pinochet has been arrested in London while on a visit to Great Britain for medical treatment, according to police. A police spokesman said Pinochet had been arrested on allegations of murdering Spanish citizens when he ruled Chile between 1973 and 1990. Picture taken Sept. 7, 1998 (Reuters photo)

British police arrest Pinochet on murder charges

LONDON (AP) — British police said Saturday they have arrested former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet on allegations of murdering Spanish citizens during his years in power.

Pinochet, 82, in London for surgery, was arrested Friday night after British authorities received a Spanish extradition warrant, a Scotland Yard spokeswoman said, speaking anonymously.

The warrant charges that between Sept. 11 1973, the year he seized power, and Dec. 31, 1983, Pinochet murdered a number of Spanish citizens in Chile, the spokeswoman said.

The spokeswoman refused to confirm where Pinochet is being held. No bearing date has been set.

Chilean Ambassador to London, Mario Artaza, told Radio Cooperativa of Santiago Saturday that the former dictator "is being held until he testifies" before an unspecified court.

He said he will seek the release of Pinochet — "what we must do is make it clear that Mr. Pinochet is a senator, who travels with a diplomatic passport," Artaza said. But he said the Chilean government "has nothing to do with the judicial aspect" of the case.

Pinochet, who turns 83 next month, underwent surgery for a herniated disc a week ago, was reported to have left London Bridge Hospital Wednesday.

The same day, Baltasar Garzon, one of two Spanish magistrates handling probes into human rights

violations in Chile and Argentina, filed a request to question Pinochet Wednesday.

Another judge, Manuel Garcia Castellon, filed a request to question Pinochet a day earlier.

Castellon's probe into murder, torture and disappearances in Chile during Pinochet's regime began in 1996. Garzon is also investigating the disappearance of Spanish citizens in Argentina during the 1976-83 military dictatorships.

Pinochet, who ousted elected President Salvador Allende in a bloody 1973 coup, remained commander-in-chief of the Chilean army until March, when he was sworn in as a senator-for-life, a post established for him in a constitution drafted by his regime.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'U.S. embargo blocks Cuban democracy'

PORTO, Portugal (AFP) — The U.S. embargo on Cuba hinders its transition to democracy, said Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres Saturday on the sidelines of the eighth Latin American and Iberian nations' summit. "If our aim is to help Cuba move towards democracy, there is only one conclusion: the embargo just makes this transition more difficult," said Guterres. He did not say whether an official call for the embargo to be lifted would be included in the draft "Porto Declaration" which is to be adopted Oct. 18 by the 21 nations taking part in the summit. The declaration is expected to centre on appeals to the leading industrial countries in the Group of Seven, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for stronger measures to ensure market stability. Cuban President Fidel Castro, who has been at the centre of attention since his arrival in Porto on Friday, warned that the current financial turmoil berailed the end of capitalism. He said Cuba was less affected by the global crisis since its economy was already at rock bottom due to the embargo. Castro, who hosts next year's summit, was feted in the Portuguese press which highlighted in particular his good natured and chatty approach to journalists, especially those from CNN. "The summit opens to a Cuban beat," wrote the Jornal de Noticias de Porto, which predicted that the declaration would contain an official call for the embargo to be lifted.

North Korean worker flees to South

SEOUL (AP) — A stowaway claiming to be a defector from North Korea has arrived in the South and surrendered to authorities, Seoul's main intelligence agency said Saturday. The man, identifying himself as Chang Chun Kwang, 27, arrived in the port of Pusan on South Korea's southern coast Friday aboard a ship from a third country, the agency refused to identify. The Agency for National Security Planning said Chang, a gold-plating worker, fled his Communist homeland in February last year. He lived in hiding in the third country, where he sneaked aboard a ship sailing to South Korea, it said. Chang left his widowed father and three brothers in North Korea. Other details, such as the defector's motive, were not immediately available. The Korean Peninsula was divided into the communist North and the capitalist South in 1945. They fought a three-year war in the early 1950s. So far this year, 52 North Koreans have defected to South Korea, mostly through China. All cited severe food and fuel shortages in the communist nation.

Nicole Kidman's London triumph off to Broadway

LONDON (R) — After triumphing on the London stage in "The Blue Room," Hollywood star Nicole Kidman is now taking her theatrical triumph to Broadway. Kidman won rave reviews in the play at the tiny Donmar Warehouse Theatre, one critic calling her performance "pure theatrical Viagra." It instantly sold out for every show. Now the play is going to New York, opening on Dec. 13 in the Cort Theatre on West 48th Street. The adaptation by British playwright David Hare of Arthur Schnitzler's "La Ronde" has astounded even its most loyal backers. "It was a new piece of work. We had no idea what the response would be," said Carol Newling, executive director of the Donmar Warehouse.

Temple roof collapses, killing nine in India

NEW DELHI (AP) — The roof of a 200-year-old temple collapsed during a religious ceremony in northern India, killing at least nine Hindu worshippers and seriously injuring another two. Press Trust of India news agency said Saturday. The injured were hospitalised Friday night, PTI quoted D.C. Mishra, the superintendent of police, as saying. Rescue workers searched the debris for any more victims in Varanasi, a temple city 675 kilometres east of New Delhi. The Hindus are celebrating "Deepawali," a festival of lights that symbolises the victory of good over evil. A magistrate is probing the cause of Friday's temple collapse.

China uncovers fabled Buddhist tomb

BEIJING (R) — Chinese archaeologists Saturday uncovered an ancient Buddhist tomb once thought to have existed only in the pages of a 1,400-year-old legend. In China's first-ever live broadcast of an excavation, state television showed researchers crawl into a cramped underground chamber in northwest Shaanxi province to find a stone chest believed to contain the jewelled remains of a saintly monk. The tomb was located beneath a pagoda in Zhouzhi county, 80 km southwest of the provincial capital of Xi'an. Workers recently discovered the chamber after dismantling the tower to make way for a reservoir, state television said. According to old writings, Emperor Yang Jian, who ruled during the Sui Dynasty (AD 581-618), built 31 pagodas across his empire — one to shelter each set of a Buddha's remains that were gifts from a nun. Until now, researchers had been unable to locate any of the tombs. Archaeologists removed an earthenware incense burner from the chamber, but declined to open the chest right away for fear of damaging delicate contents. Chiselled Chinese characters on the chest indicated that a pearl-like object — said in religious lore to be the natural product of cremating a highly enlightened monk — was inside. Officials plan to rebuild the pagoda, called Fawang Tower, and its sister temple on higher ground to protect it from the reservoir.

Road workers discover pre-historic cave in southern France

PARIS (AP) — Two road workers building a highway in southern France have stumbled across a pre-historic cave, which specialists are calling an "exceptional discovery." The workers were clearing the way for the construction of the new A75 highway to connect the cities of Millau and Beziers in the Languedoc region when they discovered the cave Friday, police said. Local authorities quickly dispatched a team of specialists to the so-called "Cirque de Moureze" area about 40 kilometres west of the city of Montpellier. Four human skeletons, three adults and a child, were preserved in the cave, as well as cooking pots, which could date from the Neolithic era, 8,000 to 3,500 B.C. According to Laurent Boismenu, of the Medical-Legal Institute in Montpellier, the cave could be from the Cro-Magnon period. France's most famous Cro-Magnon cave in Lascaux in the Dordogne region, where magnificent paintings of animals have been preserved.

Afghan opposition claims to have taken key city from Taleban

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Afghanistan's anti-Taleban alliance claimed Saturday to have taken the northern Takhar provincial capital from the Taleban religious militia and said heavy fighting raged in two other nearby districts.

There was no independent confirmation of the opposition claims that it captured Taloqan, some 260 kilometres north of the Afghan capital of Kabul.

If it is true, the capture of Taloqan will be the first major victory for the opposition in more than one year.

"Our fighters have finally captured Taloqan, the capital of Takhar province," a spokesman of the opposition said asking that his identity not be revealed.

"Around 500 Taleban fighters have been taken

prisoners and more than 100 of their vehicles captured," he said. There was no immediate report of casualties.

He said opposition fighters were locked in fierce battles with the Taleban in two other districts including Dasht-i-Archi of Takhar province.

There was no immediate comment from the Taleban. Taloqan is located near Afghanistan's northern border with the Central Asian state of Tajikistan.

The opposition forces consist mainly of the fighters of Ahmed Shah Massoud's Jamiat-e-Islami. Massoud was the defence minister in the ousted government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

The Taleban, or the students of Islam, control

almost 90 per cent of the country including Kabul.

The Taleban are Sunni Muslims and are mostly Pashtuns, while the opposition largely comprise Afghanistan's religious and ethnic minorities including Shiites, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras.

The Taleban follow a strict version of Islam that bars women from work and education, bans arts and music and forces men to wear beards.

Earlier Saturday one rocket landed in the combined military and civilian airport in the Afghan capital but there was neither damage nor injuries as a result, said Taleban troops there.

The rocket was fired from the direction of Massoud's troops, some 20 kilometres away.

Paula Jones wants \$2 million to settle Clinton case

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Paula Jones wants a cool \$2 million to settle her sexual harassment lawsuit against President Bill Clinton, the Washington Post reported Saturday.

Jones wants the first million dollars from the president, and the second million dollars from a maverick New York millionaire who offered the money in exchange for her dropping the case, the Post reported.

With her current and former teams of lawyers already fighting over the potential settlement, Jones has hired another lawyer to make sure she gets her own cut of a final settlement, the Post said.

The pressure is on for Clinton and Jones to resolve the case over the weekend. Tuesday an appeals court in Saint Paul, Minnesota, will hear opening arguments on reopening the Jones harassment suit, dismissed by a lower court in April.

Clinton supporters fear that the appeals court, full of conservatives appointed during the presidency of Republican George Bush and earlier under Ronald Reagan,

will reinstate the case for political reasons.

If the Jones case is dropped it becomes easier for the president to negotiate with Congress on the impeachment hearings concerning the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Jones, who is currently unemployed, has already wracked up legal bills of more than \$2 million.

Last week Clinton offered Jones \$500,000 to settle the case. When Jones rejected the offer he raised it to \$700,000.

Jones is no longer demanding that Clinton apologise for allegedly exposing himself to her in a Little Rock hotel when he was governor of Arkansas in 1991.

However she wants more money from Clinton — enough money to indicate an acknowledgement that she has been telling the truth about the case, the Post reported.

The former Arkansas state employee will also take the million dollars offered by New York real estate tycoon Abe Hirschfeld, who jumped in last week with a no-strings-attached offer contingent on her ending the suit, the report said.

Nation of Islam organises first British rally

LONDON (AFP) — The British wing of the black American separatist group the Nation of Islam organised its first public rally here Saturday after 12 years of semi-underground existence.

The militant followers of the movement's controversial U.S. leader Louis Farrakhan aimed to muster 10,000 men in London's central Trafalgar Square to commemorate the third anniversary of the "Million Man" march in Washington.

The Million Man march was a Washington rally organised by Farrakhan, who aimed to mobilise a million black men on the streets of the U.S. capital in a show of black unity.

In London however, only 200 had turned out in driving rain at the start of Saturday morning for the proclaimed "dawn till dusk" rally which organisers said was designed "to emulate our American brothers and organise the largest black march in British history."

One official from the rally, which was organised in coop-

eration with the Black United Front, said: "We want to show that the black community in Britain can help itself."

The Nation of Islam developed in Britain in an almost clandestine manner until last June when around 15 of its members caused a commotion during a public hearing into the 1993 murder of a young black man, Stephen Lawrence.

Lawrence's murder, for which a group of white youths widely believed to have been responsible were never brought to trial through police incompetence, was used by the Nation as a platform for its separatist, anti-white and anti-Semitic speeches.

The Nation, whose distinctive clothing is a red bow-tie, black suit and sunglasses, has developed its theses since the 1930s.

Michael Muhammed, one of the Nation's British leaders, told a weekly meeting in London: "Since the white man loves killing us so much, maybe we should return the favour."

No inter-racial dialogue is

allowed at the movement's headquarters in a mosque in Hackney, north London.

Telephone callers are asked: "Are you a member of the black community?"

All negative answers meet with the inevitable response: "Then we want to have nothing to do with you."

Two imposing guards also stand watch at the entrance to the building to prevent any non-Muslim and non-black people entering.

Jewish activists have been trying since 1986 to stop the Nation spreading what they term "anti-Semitic and anti-Christian rhetoric."

The Board of Jewish Deputies won an important victory when they succeeded in having Farrakhan banned from entering Britain after he said that Judaism was "a religion of the gutter" and called Hitler a "great man."

The British wing, operating with characteristic opacity, refuses to divulge the identities of its leaders, who in any case have all adopted the name Muhammed and dropped their surnames, which they call their "slave's names."

It also keeps secret the number of members it has, although police put the figure at around 2,500.

British authorities are particularly concerned about the movement's opening of several schools which operate without official approval.

Authorities have launched an administrative inquiry into these schools, such as the Star Chamber Academy in Hammersmith, southern London, which teaches "black history" and the Koran to its 60 pupils.

The Nation's members are also active in the capital's more dispossessed quarters, such as Brixton, scene of clashes between the large black community and police during riots in 1981 and where the movement has a second mosque.

But the Nation also pushed a more positive message at its Saturday rally, calling on black people to discipline themselves and eliminate drugs and criminality from the city's poorer areas.

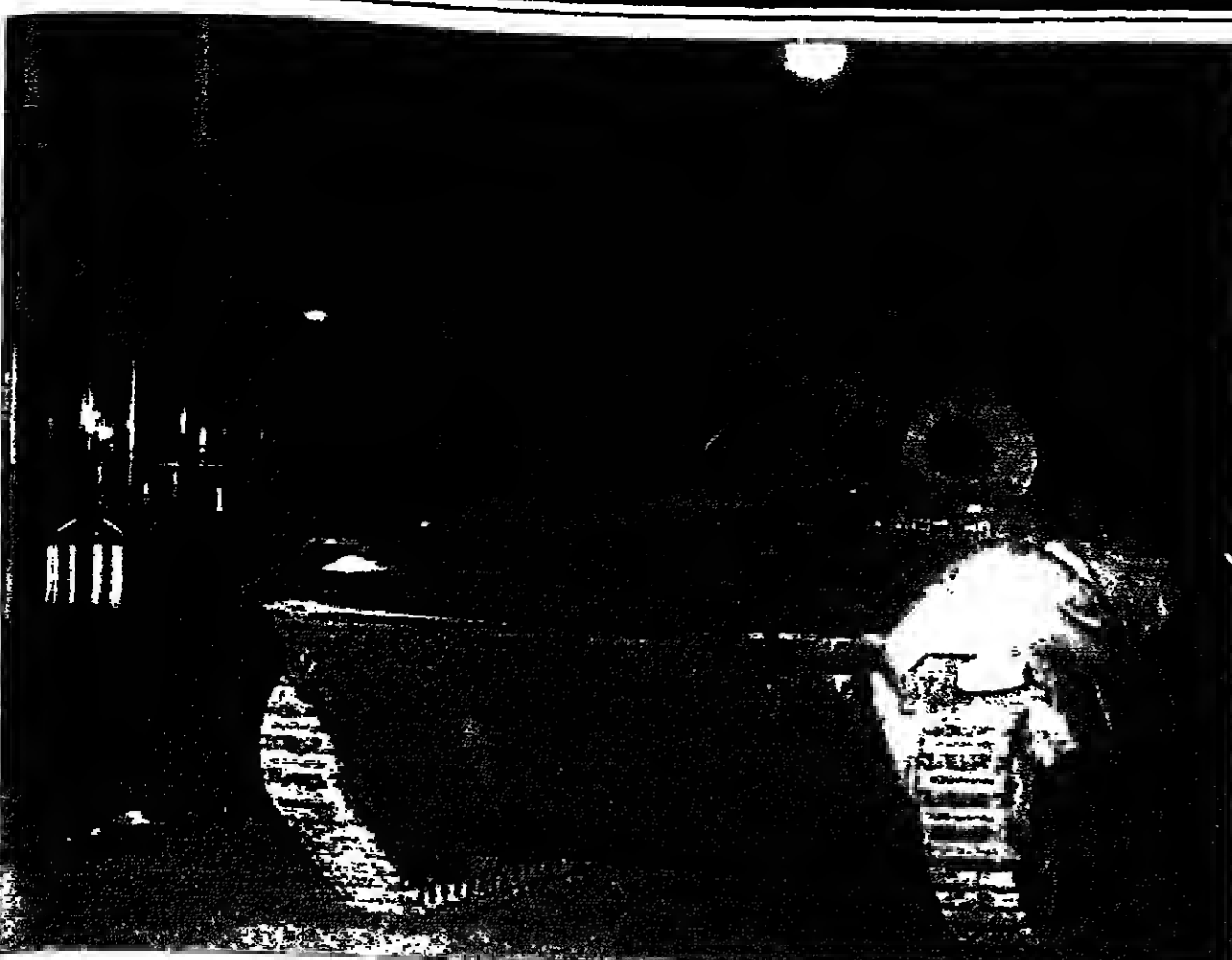
Russia disinfects piece of international space station

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian specialists started disinfecting the first component of the international space station Saturday, a power and propulsion module scheduled for launch next month, a news report said.

The 20-tonne Zarya module, built by Russia's Khrunichev company under contract with the U.S.-based Boeing, must be sterilised before it goes up Nov. 20. The disinfection is expected to last until Tuesday, the ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Khrunichev specialists as

saying. NASA will follow in December with the launch of the second part, an American-built passage-way. The third part — Russia's still unfinished service module — is to be launched from Kazakhstan in April 1999.

The station's first crew cannot go up until after that, more than a year later than originally planned. The 16 countries involved in the station have had to delay construction for two years in a row because of Russia's inability to pay its share.



Yugoslav light armoured vehicle (LAV) passes through the southern Kosovo town of Stimlje during a withdrawal of Yugoslav army units to army bases. NATO gave Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic 10 more days Friday to pull combat troops out of Kosovo or risk airstrikes, even though he once said he could withdraw them in little more than a day if he chose (Reuters photo)

OSCE experts to start preparing Kosovo mission

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — Advance teams of experts who will prepare for the arrival of the 2,000-strong Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) verification mission in Kosovo were expected in the provincial capital Pristina Saturday.

A team of 20 people are to first hold talks with Yugoslav officials in Belgrade, before leaving for Pristina, an OSCE official told AFP in Belgrade.

Most of the experts travelled from Vienna, where the OSCE is based. Others were due to in Belgrade from Croatia and Bosnia, where the pan-European security body has other missions.

"The team will take five days to assess what the observer mission will need in the way of office space, communications, security and staffing, the official added.

Regan McCarthy, OSCE spokesman in Bosnia, said that an estimated 30 or so permanent OSCE staff assigned to Kosovo would likely come from the organisation's mission in Croatia.

The busier mission in Bosnia which is helping to implement the Dayton accords, that ended the 1992-95 war there would be unlikely to spare many staffers, he said.

Observers for the mission will be drawn from member nations of the OSCE and he deployed in the province in the coming weeks.

Their task is to verify if Serbia is complying with U.N. demands it halt its crackdown on ethnic Albanian separatists, withdraw military units from the province, and allow those displaced by fighting to return home.

Friday, the formal paperwork for the mission was signed in Belgrade by OSCE Chairman Bronislaw Geremek and Yugoslav Foreign Minister Zivadin Jovanovic.

NATO decided Friday to give Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic another ten days to withdraw his forces from Kosovo.

However, the North Atlantic Treaty kept in place an order that could launch airstrikes against Serbia if Belgrade fails to comply.

Though NATO forces remained on stand-by, Milosevic has been given until Oct. 27 to meet U.N. demands on reducing the number of military and special police in Kosovo, drafted in over the last seven months to crush an ethnic Albanian rebel movement.

Friday's extension superseded an earlier deadline of 0500 GMT Saturday.

The decision came as NATO officials in Brussels announced that two special units — one police, one military — had been withdrawn from Kosovo.

Serb and ethnic Albanian officials both reported that several military convoys had also left the southern province towards central Serbia.

However, Serb sources reported Saturday fresh attacks by Kosovo Albanian rebels in different regions of the province Friday, in which two men were injured.

A Serb security guard was injured in an attack late Friday on the area of a coal mine near Pristina, while three rebels of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) shot and wounded a police reservist near Lipjan in central Kosovo, the centre said.

Earlier Friday, a group of armed Albanians attacked a police station in the Pristina suburb Vranjevac, the centre said.

It also reported three different attacks on police patrols and a station in the Podujevo, north of Pristina, a police checkpoint in Komorane, on the road between the capital Pristina and the western town of Pec.

The centre reported at least six other attacks on the police positions in central, south and southwestern regions of the province, but said there were no injured.

There was no immediate confirmation of the reported attacks.

Congo rebels deny claim of government assault on Kindu

KIGALI (AFP) — Rebels Saturday denied that government troops were attacking one of their stronghold towns in the east of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), after sources in Kinshasa reported 48 hours of shelling.

The second vice-president of the rebels' political movement, Arthur Zahidi Ngoma, told AFP from Goma in the far east of DRC that "nothing is going on in Kindu."

In Kinshasa, a source close to the presidency of Laurent Kabila, as well as a government aviation source, said Saturday that the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC) were subjecting the Kindu region to heavy bombardment and had done so for 48 hours.

The sources in Kinshasa gave few details of this reported counter-offensive against Kindu, a central eastern town with an airport suitable for military use, which fell to the Tutsi-led rebels Monday.

However, aviation sources in Kinshasa reported intensive military activity and the transporting of large numbers of troops to the eastern front.

This week, the FAC said its soldiers and most of its artillery had fallen back from Kindu itself "in good order."

Zahidi Ngoma, a leader of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), told AFP in Kigali by satellite telephone that "the FAC does not have the means to bombard Kindu."

"Their planes, the MiG-21s at their disposal, have a range of only 40 minutes' flying time and since they no longer have an airbase in the region, these are unusable."

Asked by AFP whether FAC troops could be using a Yanan Chinese-made motorised multiple rocket-launcher of a time seen after Kindu fell, Zahidi Ngoma said: "It would have been necessary for them to get it out, but there is no passable road enabling them to do so."

An AFP correspondent saw such a weapon at Kindu's rebel-seized airport, but it had been sabotaged by FAC troops before they withdrew.

Rebels in Kindu also held an impressive arsenal of captured FAC weapons, including heavy artillery and portable rocket-launchers, with large amounts of ammunition.

"Kabila's lying, but I ask myself just how long he's going to go on lying like this to the Congolese," Zahidi Ngoma said.

He added that, for the rebels, "the victory in Kindu has enabled us to launch an attack on Kamina, a base towards which we're advancing."

Kamina, in the mineral-rich southeastern Katanga province, is one of the main military bases in the vast DRC. Government troops and their allies had been using Kindu, capital of Maniema province further north, as a forward base for their anti-rebel operations.

Imprisoned former U.S. teacher has second child of teen lover

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Mary Kay Letourneau, the former U.S. teacher convicted of child-rap after bearing the baby of a 13-year-old student, gave birth to a second baby allegedly fathered by the same boy.

Letourneau, 36, was rushed early Saturday to a hospital in the city of Tacoma, in Washington state, and gave birth to a healthy baby girl, NBC news reported.

Letourneau is serving a seven-and-a-half-year term at a prison here for raping the teen, who had been her student twice in previous years.

The former teacher bore the boy's first child in May 1997. After a six-month jail sentence she was sentenced in November 1997 to a sex-offender treatment programme.

However, Letourneau had been out of jail for just one month when she was rearrested in February, after police caught her and her teenage lover together in a parked car in violation of her parole.

The boy, now 14, reportedly admitted to a counsellor that the two still had a sexual relationship, a violation of the conditions of her release.

In interviews after her arrest, Letourneau claimed the boy was the love of her life. He also has said he hopes to marry Letourneau when she's out of prison.

Their first child lives with the boy and his mother. It has not yet been determined with whom the second child will live.

Prison officials had earlier vowed that she would not be able to keep the infant.

In addition to the infant girl, and a year-and-a-half girl from the affair with her former student, Letourneau is the mother of four older children.

Her husband has moved their children to Alaska and initiated divorce proceedings.

Italy's leftist leader seeks cross-party government

ROME (AFP) — Italian leftist leader and former Communist Massimo D'Alema began talks Saturday to form a new government which would reconcile Communists and centre-right politicians.

D'Alema, 49, head of the Left Democrats (DS) and the first former communist-designated to hold power in Italy, was chosen Friday by President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, a day after Acting Prime Minister Romano Prodi failed to win enough parliamentary support.

Hopes are pinned on D'Alema who said he intended forging a "stable" parliamentary base from among the many factions in the Italian lower house of parliament.

He began the consultations with Prodi's outgoing centre-left coalition, of which the DS is the dominant member, before seeing the centre-right Democratic Union for the Republic (UDR) and a group of dissident Communists, led by Armando Cossutta.

Prodi's coalition the UDR and Cossutta's supporters all endorsed D'Alema as prime minister-designate.

But it remains to be seen whether a D'Alema government can pursue policies satisfying both the UDR, led by former Christian Democrat President Francesco Cossiga, and the communists.

"Squaring the circle. Bringing together Cossiga and Cossutta."

That is the first nightmare for Massimo D'Alema. He must walk a tightrope to form the government," wrote the centre-left La Repubblica Saturday.

"D'Alema wants his party to be the guiding light of a progressive pole. Cossiga wants to destroy the poles and recreate the old Christian Democrat mire," warned the centrist Corriere della Sera daily.

Left-wing daily L'Unita went as far as to say this was the last chance to avoid early elections.

D'Alema will tell Scalfaro Monday whether he has succeeded where Prodi failed.

Prodi was Scalfaro's first choice as caretaker premier but abandoned his attempt to secure parliamentary backing Thursday, thus bowing out of a crisis begun eight days ago when key coalition allies, the Refounded Communist Party, rejected his budget plans and forced a confidence vote.

He lost the motion by just one vote, forcing the collapse of what had been Italy's first centre-left coalition and its second longest-serving government in post-war history.

If D'Alema succeeds, he will also be setting a precedent as the first Italian leader with links to Europe's most powerful Communist Party.

The prospect rattled the conservative Catholic press, which described D'Alema's nomination as premier as "the most reckless route to power."

The prime minister-designate sought to calm Catholic fears, stressing his respect for the Church's values.

D'Alema, the son of communist leader Giuseppe D'Alema, is credited with having transformed the old Communist Party into a social-democratic formation having broken completely with Marxism.

Russia, Japan work towards WWII peace treaty

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov met visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura in Moscow Saturday and said the two countries would continue working towards a peace treaty formally ending World War II hostilities.

Komura arrived in Moscow late Friday for a day of talks paving the way for an official visit by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi on Nov. 11-12.

Opening his meetings with Komura, Primakov said working groups had already "done a lot of work that will bring us further down the path of completing a peace treaty."

Russia and Japan have never signed a treaty ending World War II hostilities and have a bitter territorial dispute over a group of islands.

"The Russian side will stand firmly behind positions worked out by President Boris Yeltsin and (former) Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Primakov as saying. In two informal meetings this year and last, Hashimoto and Yeltsin agreed to sign a peace treaty by 2000.

After the talks, Primakov said Obuchi's visit would be a "landmark in the process of moving Russo-Japanese relations to true good neighbourliness and partnership on the basis of the agreements reached" at the meetings between Yeltsin and Hashimoto, TASS reported.

The agency, citing a Russian government spokesman, said Komura had invited Primakov to visit Tokyo, and Primakov accepted.

Talks Saturday between Komura and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov were also to focus on boosting economic and commercial relations, the Russian foreign ministry said in a statement earlier this week.

"The Russian side hopes that the upcoming talks will be conducted in the constructive, businesslike and open atmosphere that has come to mark Russo-Japanese relations in the recent past," the statement said.

Obuchi will be the first Japanese prime minister in 25 years to pay an official visit to Russia, the latest sign of thawing relations. Recent visits by Japanese premiers, including Hashimoto, have been strictly unofficial.

Ivanov recently met Komura in New York and assured him that Russia, though mired in deep economic crisis, would press on with economic reforms and fulfil its international obligations.

In a letter to Obuchi, Yeltsin thanked Japan for its support during the economic crisis and said he believed November's summit would mark a big step forward in bilateral relations.

Despite the warm words, Russia and Japan remain at odds over ownership of four remote Pacific islands seized by Soviet troops in 1945 and claimed by Tokyo as its Northern Territories.

Pakistan ex-governor, mullah killed

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Unidentified gunmen shot dead a former governor of Pakistan's Sindh province and two aides in the southern city of Karachi and killed a prominent Sunni Muslim mullah in Islamabad in attacks Saturday, police said.

They said gunmen killed Hakim Said, 78, just after dawn at a clinic in southern Karachi. The city, the capital of Sindh province, has been in the grip of political and sectarian violence for several years.

Gunmen also shot and fatally wounded a prominent Sunni Muslim activist, Maulvi Muhammad Abdullah, at a mosque in the south of the capital Islamabad. Police said he died of his wounds.

No motive was immediately established for either of the attacks, which follow a pattern of reprisal-driven murders by militants from the majority Sunni and minority Shiite branches of Islam in recent months.

Abdullah was a well-known anti-Shiite preacher close to the militant Sunni Sipah-ul-Sahaba Pakistan movement.

The Karachi attack appeared to be a well-planned ambush, police in the restive port city said.

They said three youths arrived at Said's clinic on Arambagh Road in the southern district of the city in a car at 6:00 a.m. (0100 GMT) and opened fire immediately after Said and his colleagues had got out of their vehicle.

The shooting left Said, his assistant Hakim Abdul Qadir Qureshi and Wali Mohammad dead. Two other people, including a bodyguard, were wounded.

Residents said Said was in the habit of visiting the clinic Saturday and Sunday immediately after early morning prayers.

Hakim Said was a devout Muslim, an Islamic scholar and a pioneer of the Hamdard Foundation, an institution which promotes the use of eastern herbal medication. He also established a Hamdard University in Karachi.

More than 750 people have been killed in violence in Karachi this year despite a huge security presence in what is Pakistan's biggest city and commercial hub.

Chevening Scholarships Programme

The British Chevening Scholarships Programme is a prestigious scheme funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It enables the very best of young professionals to pursue their postgraduate studies in the United Kingdom and to become familiar with the UK and its culture.

The Chevening Scholarships Programme was launched in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1984. Since then, some 180 Jordanians have undertaken study in the UK, most of whom have since returned to assume senior responsibilities in Jordan.

For the academic year 1999/2000, we are looking for scholars with a record of excellence, either professional or academic, under the age of 40, who will use their studies in the UK in the application of their work in Jordan. Priority is given to candidates with excellent command of English and some relevant work experience.

Chevening Scholarships are normally awarded for Masters degrees, but applications for short courses of three months' duration or more can be considered.

Candidates are encouraged to apply in humanities and in social sciences.

The Programme does not support applicants for PhD degrees or those applying to study arts subjects, archaeology or medical sciences e.g. medicine and dentistry, apart from subjects relating to community health and the environment.

The scholarship will be for the individual only. No financial or other assistance will be given to the scholars' families to accompany them to the UK. Selected candidates are normally expected to contribute the cost of their international travel.

Application forms along with detailed guidelines can be collected from the British Embassy or the British Council in Amman from 18 October - 3 November 1998, from 1100 to 1500 hrs. The deadline for returning completed applications is 10 November 1998.

British Embassy
Amman

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 Jordan Press Foundation,
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

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Desalinisation is solution

THE EUPHORIA being generated by the prospect of a megaproject to bring water from the Disi basin, 300 kilometres in the south up to Amman, could be short-lived if the authorities did not introduce immediate measures to rectify the imminent depletion of water sources and curb improper and unsafe exploitation of existing aquifers. Although the \$700 million project would supply 100 million cubic metres (mcm) a year, it is estimated that at the rate we are using and polluting our existing water sources, we would be no better off than we are now by the time the Disi reaches our taps in the year 2005.

Part of the problem stems from existing use of the Disi water. Four privately-owned companies are now extracting this precious water free of charge under an 1985 agreement that will only run out in 2010. The first question that comes to mind is why a country in such dire need of water and suffering from chronic water shortages offers water free of charge to private firms to produce wheat. If this is not a time for accountability, then when is? Under law of public domain, the government can and should annul the agreement forthwith so that the depletion of the Disi water would slowdown to manageable proportions and the pollution of the aquifer itself by the pesticides, insecticides and untreated waste of the present usage would also end.

The project to bring water from the south is not only a good idea, as Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy Hani Mulki wisely observed recently, but a must. We simply have no other viable and affordable alternative source for the time being. Yet even the Disi water would not be enough due to rapid population growth. We, therefore, need to think in terms of water desalinisation, and sooner than later. Water is so essential and basic that we simply cannot afford to rely on non-renewable sources of water for much longer. The water desalinisation strikes us as the most viable long-term solution to water shortage.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dussur's Mazen Saket urged the government to take its time before privatising the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC). He said the public company, which provides important and basic services to citizens, has developed its services in order to reach remote areas, despite lack of feasibility. During the past ten years, the company, according to the writer, has made revenue of more than JD600 million, which makes the company profitable. Bearing this in mind, said the writer, it is strange that there is such determination to sell the JTC to a strategic partner and not offer it on the market where a Jordanian company might buy a controlling stake. According to the writer, the company's assets are estimated at two billion dinars, but the British and U.S. strategic partners want to pay \$300 million in order to own 40 per cent of the company, and have the power to appoint the company's financial and technical managers as well as having half the seats on the board of directors. The company is one of the Kingdom's national security establishments, and it must stay in Jordanian hands, Saket said.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi commented on the Syrian-Turkish crisis, saying it has started to ease off. He mentioned three reasons behind this: Syria's positive response regarding the Kurdish Labour Party — Turkey's essential condition to stop escalation; Egyptian mediation, supported by Jordan and Saudi Arabia; and three generals' refusal of a military confrontation. Egypt, over the last week, has proved its diplomatic capability and weight in the region, and although Cairo is aware of Turkish demands, it stood against any Israeli-Turkish relation that could support Israel's expansion and harm Arab interests, claimed the writer. Additionally, the writer said, refusing any kind of escalation was both international and Arab will. Lessons must be learned from this crisis, Rimawi urged.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Imports and exports reflect recession

BOTH IMPORTS and exports declined sharply this year, a strong indication that the economic recession, now in its fifth year, is getting worse in 1998, and that economic growth could be zero if not negative.

Imports during the first seven months of 1998 dropped by 4.5 per cent compared to the same period last year. Such a reduction is of course desirable in a normal situation — it helps the balance of payments and protects the reserves of the Central Bank. However, it is believed that the decline in imports may be due to the economic recession and a further deterioration of the standard of living of the population as measured by private consumption.

In a way, the nature of the reduction in imports this year is not that bad if we examine its elements and the reasons behind it.

The first reason for lower imports is that crude oil imported from Iraq is cheaper following the fall of prices worldwide. This reason alone is responsible for 2.6 percentage points out of the overall drop of 4.5 per cent. The rest of the decline in imports is caused by a reduction in the importation of cooking oil due to a corresponding reduction in Iraqi imports of this foodstuff. In this respect, one should not forget the strength of the JD exchange rate as a factor in reducing the cost of goods imported from Europe and Japan calculated in JDs.

The mix of the imports was not better either. Imports of

machines and equipment was 5 per cent down, an indication of lower investment in industry.

Exports on the other hand also declined during the first seven months of 1998 by 6.5 per cent compared to the same period last year. This happened for the first time in many years and should be a cause for concern.

Again the analysis of the variation reduces the importance of this fact. 62 per cent of the reduction in exports is due to less exports of livestock to Saudi Arabia, which is a step in the right direction, because Jordan became used to raising cattle for the Saudi market dependant on cheap feed subsidised by the government. Live animals were exported in the past at a price below the real cost, another evidence that subsidies mean distortion and national loss.

The rest of the decrease in exports is due to lower exports of cooking oil to Iraq, which is practically a re-export activity with a minimal value added. The reduction of this kind of export is matched by a corresponding reduction in imports.

Other secondary factors which contributed to the set-back in exports are: Syria imported less Jordanian cement than agreed upon, Israel prevented Jordanian cement from reaching the Palestinian market in the quantities contracted, and Saudi Arabia reduced its imports of certain Jordanian medicines to protect American and European intellectual property rights. Iraq remained at the top of Jordanian export markets.

absorbing some 24 per cent of all Jordanian exports, part of which made under the trade protocol in exchange for crude oil, and another part under the oil for food Security Council resolution. Iraq is expected to double its imports from Jordan once sanctions are lifted.

It is worth mentioning at this juncture that the reduction of imports by 4.5 per cent is larger in absolute terms than the 6.5 per cent reduction in exports, thus the deficit in the trade balance was narrowed, itself a desirable outcome.

The Jordanian economy is fully open to international markets. Imports and exports therefore play a major role in the level of economic activity in the country. Management of foreign trade however, is hardly possible through direct means such as prohibition, quotas, or licensing. The government can only employ indirect instruments to influence foreign trade through incentives, credit facilities, and trade agreements.

This analysis is not meant to play down the alarming signals of negative growth in imports and exports. Even if we can justify the reduction of exports by 6.5 per cent, by no means can we justify lack of positive growth of exports, which should not have been below 10 per cent if we want the gross domestic product (GDP) to show a positive growth rate.

If the export sector is really the engine for the rapid economic growth, we should realise that exports themselves are now in bad need of revitalisation.

Dr. Fahed Fanek



LETTERS

Hear no evil, see no evil

To the editor:

THIS LETTER is in reply to Mr. Potetiza's letter dated October 14 on being a 'real' Serb. Mr. Potetiza steadfastly denies any atrocities committed by the Serbian authority in Kosovo. I am actually the one who doesn't know whether to laugh or cry. What name would he exactly give to burning of homes, throat slitting, mass grave sites, and two hundred thousand refugees? Domestic policy? Mr. Potetiza is desperate to try and convince the Jordanian reader that everything is "just fine" in Kosovo. Coming from the diplomatic mission, that is hardly surprising. Perhaps the gentleman should realise that Jordanians are extremely educated and intelligent and will not be fooled by such ridiculous remarks.

In reply to his accusations that the KLA are terrorists, the only terrorism that stands out is Mr. Milosevic's policy in trying to crush the freedom of ethnic Albanians. The world knows his ruthlessness and cruelty... despite what Mr. Potetiza might try and portray.

Furthermore, Mr. Potetiza states that his people are disgusted by such propaganda. I would like to point out that human rights and the self-determination of a people is NOT propaganda. What is extremely disgusting is the manner the Yugoslav government treats individuals with different political and ideological views. The whole world realises these barbaric acts committed by the Serbs. The evidence is on the ground. Unfortunately, Mr. Potetiza seems to suffer from a symptom of "hear no evil, see no evil."

Norman El-Bakri,
 Jordan University,
 Amman.

Damned if you do, damned if you don't

By Fareed Zakaria

A DIPLOMAT from a Third World country told me recently of an exchange he had three years ago with his American counterpart after a dull meeting at the United Nations. "You Americans have lost interest in the world," my friend complained. "You used to be vitally engaged in every international arena, thoroughly prepared for every U.N. meeting. Now you barely show up. It's irresponsible." The American diplomat had a quick response. "You should be thrilled," he explained. "When we were active, you denounced us for interfering in your affairs and accused us of neo-imperialism. We're damned if we do and damned if we don't."

I was reminded of this exchange last week when I watched President Bill Clinton walk into the General Assembly of the United Nations to a standing ovation. People have interpreted this rare demonstration variously, some seeing it as a show of support from politicians for a beleaguered colleague. William F. Buckley Jr. argued that it was a sign of anti-Americanism, since it was obviously directed against

American domestic politics, the Congress and its concerns. But most have seen it as a plea from the world to Washington to end its obsession with the Lewinsky affair and get back to the serious business of international affairs. Indeed, when asked, foreign leaders from South Africa's Nelson Mandela to Germany's Helmut Kohl have said something to this effect. The world, it seems, craves American leadership.

If so, it is a remarkable turnaround. For decades Washington was pilloried by the Third World for its "hegemonic designs." On many issues, even European allies sought to distance themselves from Washington. After serving a stint as ambassador to the United Nations, Daniel Patrick Moynihan came to the conclusion that the United States would have to remain in "permanent opposition" at that world body. Why now do these same countries speak wistfully of the need for a global problem solver?

The end of the cold war explains much of this shift in attitude. The nature and purpose of American intervention has changed dramatically since that conflict ended. During the U.S.-Soviet standoff, American involvement

in the world resulted from a push from Washington. Today, it is caused by a pull from the outside world. Where once Washington sought to involve itself around the world, today the world seeks to involve Washington in its affairs.

Even at home the debate about American intervention has been turned topsy-turvy. During the cold war, American intervention was prompted by strategic and political concerns, namely anti-Soviet strategy and anti-communist ideology. Humanitarian concerns usually ended up limiting the scope and frequency of American interventions. But today it is the idealists who urge intervention — in Haiti, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia — while strategists, like former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, urge selectivity, caution and moderation. In fact the new interventionists urge American involvement in precisely those areas where Washington has few national interests — this ensures that its motives are pure.

But don't get too comfortable with this world. It will not last; indeed, it is already changing. We have been living through an era of extraordinary ideological

consensus. During the cold war people disagreed furiously about the purpose of American intervention. Critics charged that it chose the "wrong side" in local struggles. Sen. Christopher Dodd argued against the Reagan administration's support for the Nicaraguan contras, declaring that it was "standing against the tide of history." For the past 10 years, America — has had little trouble agreeing on the direction of history. Even when people debated whether to intervene — in Bosnia for example — they picked the same good and bad guys.

The retreat in Russia, the Asian crisis, the emboldening of Saddam Hussein, the return of terrorism, the rise of China are all bringing discord back into international politics. Increasingly the major powers, and many others as well, have different prescriptions for these various problems. Earlier this year, when the Clinton administration wanted to bomb Saddam for sabotaging the U.N. inspection process, it could not get a single major power — except a lukewarm Britain — to back its sabre-rattling. The Asian crisis has begun splitting open the consensus on economic liberalisation that much of

the world had adopted over the past decade. For the Middle East, Europe and the United States have dramatically different diagnoses of the problem and solution.

This age of consensus is ending for one more important reason — America's status as the world's dominant power. The world longs for American leadership, in the abstract. Once it's exercised, other nations have to decide whether they can live with it in practice. When global leadership, a vague and banal concept, becomes specific — for example, the bombing of terrorist facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan — support for it evaporates. It is not that the United States is behaving like a bully, far from it. It is simply that the historic suspicion of domination, empire and hegemony is reasserting itself after a decade long hiatus. A British diplomat said to me last week: "One reads about the world's desire for American leadership only in the United States. Everywhere else one reads about American arrogance and unilateralism." Maybe the cold war wasn't so strange after all.

— Newsweek

Sharon's past, Arafat's future and Clinton's gamble

By George S. Hishmeh

THE BEGUILING question at the Wye Plantation Mideast summit is which party needs an agreement most, and therein may lie the answer to its chances of success.

The fact that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has named superhawk Ariel Sharon as his foreign minister and key participant in the three-way discussions has needless to say thrown a monkey wrench into the equation. The jolt was felt everywhere although a few thought his presence could give the wily Israeli leader the needed right-wing cover. Of course, Sharon may bolt out of the meetings with all his guns firing and in the process derail the peace process which has been on life support for the past 19 months.

Netanyahu, it may be argued, needs an agreement if for nothing else but to forestall a Palestinian declaration of statehood next May, the deadline for the interim Oslo accords. Otherwise, he will be at pains explaining to his people how he failed to bring them "peace with security" when all hell breaks loose in mid-1999.

Although some find hope in the fact that Sharon was a member of the Begin government when it accepted much to Sharon's chagrin to pull out from the Sinai in compliance with the terms of the

Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, he has not mellowed in those 20 years.

He told a conference here last May, as he sat next to the speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Ahmed Qureia, that "no state has ever given up essential strategic depth or territory." He stressed, "in the case of Israel we are dealing with a small territory and minimal strategic depth." The Israeli, who has been held by his own government indirectly responsible for the killings of thousands of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon, remains uncompromising on this question.

He wants the refugees resettled "in the places where they live (through a joint Arab-Israeli international effort)." His argument is that Israel had also "absorbed" about one million Jews from various Arab and Muslim countries.

Sharon "insisted" on reciprocity, the deletion of parts of the Palestinian Covenant and a "full-scale (Palestinian) struggle against the terror infrastructure in the areas under its control." He was not ambiguous about "Judea and Samaria" which he described as "the cradle of the Jewish people" where Jewish life and presence has been "uninterrupted" for thousands of years and no nation or country on earth would give up territory and historical sites which are at the roots of its national

existence." Although he maintained that Israel is willing to "compromise and make concessions," Sharon argued before the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that the "time dimension" is most important — (to) allow for development of normalised relations of coexistence." Moreover, the implacable Sharon said matter-of-factly "the security zones will remain in Israel's hands and under full Israeli security control." It will remain to be seen whether Netanyahu can keep Sharon on a short leash and succumb to the give-and-take at the negotiations. After all a successful conference will assure Netanyahu's reelection in the year 2000.

Palestinian President Arafat, who went along with the American proposal for a 13 per cent Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank since last January, yielded another concession when he deleted from his U.N. speech his promise to declare Palestinian statehood next May should Israel fail to come to terms on a final settlement. He could have insisted that Israel equally refrain from its unilateral actions on settlements, one of which was upgraded last week to a city. Regardless, all is not lost, for Arafat can still play his card next May especially if he is able to secure recognition for his state from any of the major powers — Russia, China and France. But most importantly for Arafat, is his eagerness to be the first Palestinian head of state.

Although the two Mideast leaders have their own reasons for reaching an accommodation, it is President Clinton who is seen as the one person at the conference who wants a successful conference badly. A foreign-policy triumph will boost the standing of this bruised chief executive, whose popularity ratings continue to edge upwards particularly after the Republicans pushed for the impeachment inquiry. They may yet pay for it at the polls in the November by-election.

This was the background for Clinton's promise that he is "prepared to invest as much time as it takes" to help achieve an agreement between the two Mideast adversaries. The gamble on a summit seemed worth it in his administration's calculations.

But it's an open question whether the enfeebled Clinton, not known for his boldness or readiness to push — as he must — Netanyahu, who in turn had publicly balked at American pressure after the infamous London encounter with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. This time Clinton cannot waiver since the many issues that need to be settled at the conference centre outside Washington are thorny, especially the extent and timing of the third Israeli pullback and the freeze on Israeli settlements. His high-yield gamble could earn him good fortunes.

An out
 contrib
 Middle
 studies

Al Dussur's Mazen Saket urged the government to take its time before privatising the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC). He said the public company, which provides important and basic services to citizens, has developed its services in order to reach remote areas, despite lack of feasibility. During the past ten years, the company, according to the writer, has made revenue of more than JD600 million, which makes the company profitable. Bearing this in mind, said the writer, it is strange that there is such determination to sell the JTC to a strategic partner and not offer it on the market where a Jordanian company might buy a controlling stake. According to the writer, the company's assets are estimated at two billion dinars, but the British and U.S. strategic partners want to pay \$300 million in order to own 40 per cent of the company, and have the power to appoint the company's financial and technical managers as well as having half the seats on the board of directors. The company is one of the Kingdom's national security establishments, and it must stay in Jordanian hands, Saket said.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi commented on the Syrian-Turkish crisis, saying it has started to ease off. He mentioned three reasons behind this: Syria's positive response regarding the Kurdish Labour Party — Turkey's essential condition to stop escalation; Egyptian mediation, supported by Jordan and Saudi Arabia; and three generals' refusal of a military confrontation. Egypt, over the last week, has proved its diplomatic capability and weight in the region, and although Cairo is aware of Turkish demands, it stood against any Israeli-Turkish relation that could support Israel's expansion and harm Arab interests, claimed the writer. Additionally, the writer said, refusing any kind of escalation was both international and Arab will. Lessons must be learned from this crisis, Rimawi urged.

U.S. rate cut sparks similar growth moves elsewhere

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A cut in short-term U.S. interest rates by the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) appeared to prompt similar measures elsewhere in the world, raising hopes that a global recession might be averted.

"The Fed is doing its job," declared International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Michel Camdessus. "I think it's a good measure. It could contribute to reestablishing confidence."

Camdessus recently made clear he would welcome further growth-enhancing steps by the Fed after the U.S. central bank intervened Sept. 29 to lower its benchmark federal funds rate a quarter of a point to 5.25 per cent.

On Thursday Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan accommodated the IMF chief with another quarter point cut to five per cent in federal funds, a target used by U.S. banks making overnight loans among themselves.

While the latest reduction was primarily aimed at heading off a credit squeeze in the United States, it was also seen as a signal that Washington was prepared to take up arms against a global crisis.

Taking their cue from the Fed, banks in Hong Kong reduced their prime rates by

a quarter of a point to 9.75 per cent, while the Bank of Canada lowered its discount rate a similar amount to 5.50 per cent.

In London, the Bank of England issued a tantalising reminder that its monetary policy committee does not have to wait for a regular monthly meeting in order to change key rates.

The bank lowered its base rate by a quarter of a point to 7.25 per cent at a regular meeting last week but there has been widespread pressure for further action.

Financial analysts here speculated that Thursday's action by the Fed could nudge other European central banks in the same direction, notably after Spain and Ireland lowered rates last week.

But there is resistance to a concerted reduction in France and Germany, where it is feared that any such step would be disruptive ahead of the start of European monetary union January 1.

Lower interest rates in the United States, the world's current buyer of last resort, are designed to maintain U.S. growth and consumer spending while bolstering the spirits of worried investors.

A rate cut by the Fed is considered a key element in export-based efforts by emerging market economies

in Asia. Latin America and Russia to pull themselves out the doldrums.

"The significance of the Federal Reserve's actions cannot be overstated," according to Jerry Jasnowski, president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

"By cutting rates, the Federal Reserve is in effect speeding up the growth of money supply. Some of these dollars will be transmitted abroad due to the U.S. trade deficit and by bank loans and investment in foreign countries," he explained.

"In this way, the increase in the global dollar supply will help relieve countries that are currently facing shortages of foreign exchange," he said.

A cut in U.S. rates also tends to lower the cost in dollars of external debt obligations held by emerging markets.

A senior Bank of Korea official, Ahn Byung-Chan, said that the U.S. rate reduction had reduced Seoul's foreign debt payments by around \$700 million.

He said South Korea's foreign debt obligations came to \$152.3 billion at the end of July, with some 90 per cent of the outstanding loans under floating rate contracts.

But despite such promising signs, analysts caution that the effect of lower interest rates may not be felt right away.

"The impact is largely psychological, a boost to international investors' fragile psyches," said Brad Belt of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies here. "How much of an impact on the real economy and on the behaviour of consumers and investors remains to be seen."

He noted that in Japan rate cuts have had little impact, where consumers "are sufficiently worried about the future that they're not responding to monetary or fiscal stimuli."

The fear now in world financial circles is that international investors might remain similarly depressed and unmoved by prospects of cheaper credit.

Clinton: Japan key to world economic health

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton Saturday praised Japan's steps to reform its fragile banking system, and said world financial health depended on quick economic reform in Tokyo.

Clinton said in his weekly radio address it was critical for Asia and Europe to promote growth to prevent new global financial turmoil and protect American prosperity.

He said Japan, the world's second-largest economy behind the United States, must lead by opening and deregulating its economy to strengthen its financial system.

"Now the health of Asia's economy and indeed the world depends upon Japan," Clinton said from the White House.

Japan is under global pressure to recapitalize its debt-heavy banking system.

Parliament enacted measures on Friday that would, among other things, spend \$517 billion in public funds to replenish the reserves of weak, but viable banks.

Clearing bad loans, boosting capital and resuming healthy lending practices are said to be central to reversing Japan's worst postwar recession and averting world economic hardship.

"I welcome the substantial assistance in Japan's legislation to repair its troubled banking system," Clinton said. "Now it's critical to avoid further delay by moving quickly and using that money more effectively."

Clinton said U.S. prosperity "rests upon the strength of an increasingly interdependent world," which supports American exports and services. And he said the United States was doing its part to help offset turmoil caused by countries which are having a "hard time" managing their economies.

"We must act to promote our own prosperity and to protect our people at this critical moment by working to stabilise the global economy and helping our friends to restore growth," he stressed.

Clinton's remarks came two days after the U.S. Federal Reserve, in a surprise move, cut key lending rates by a quarter percentage point for the second time in under

three weeks. Also this week, the White House and Congress agreed, as part of the federal budget deal, to free up \$18 billion for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The extra money will gener-

ate contributions from other countries, boosting IMF resources by some \$90 billion as it struggles to draw up loans for nations squeezed by the global financial downturn. "Now the IMF is

stronger and ready to act," Clinton said. "We must make certain that when it acts, it acts to promote global growth and to limit the reach of financial crisis. In turn, this will foster a stronger economy here at home."

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 16/10/98 3:26

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.6136	0.6849	1.3105	116.35	1.5375	1697.90	1.8205	5.4127
DE Mark	0.6197	-	0.3621	0.8123	72.03	0.9624	988.80	1.1280	3.3532
GB Sterling	1.7096	2.7606	-	2.2418	198.87	2.6287	2732.41	3.1132	6.2567
CH Franc	0.7631	123.00	0.4455	-	88.65	1.1727	1217.91	138.77	4.1255
JP Yen	0.0098	1.3880	0.8020	1.1255	-	1.3204	13.71	156.32	4.6475
CA Dollar	0.6504	1.2916	0.4225	1.0565	1.32	-	1270.80	1.4551	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0104	0.3660	0.9821	1374.00	0.9625	-	11.40	3.3880
NL Guilder	0.5493	68.61	0.3211	71.99	63.89	0.8445	876.92	-	2.9723
FR Franc	0.1848	0.2983	0.1080	24.2300	21.49	0.2842	33.65	33.6500	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7475	0.3770	3.6399	0.2975	3.6728	1602.00	3.4025
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2856	0.5317	5.1339	0.4195	5.1803	2118.45	4.7990
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.1892	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0794	0.98	400.80	0.9079
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8808	9.9411	-	9.96	0.7892	9.74	3884.40	9.0299
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0296	1.0296	-	0.0817	1.01	412.65	0.9348
Kuwait Dinar	3.3613	2.3832	12.5966	1.2671	12.23	-	12.35	5048.74	0.9348
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0203	1.0203	0.9910	0.0610	-	408.95	0.9264
Lebanese/1000	0.67	0.4720	2.4980	0.2510	2.4234	0.1981	2.4453	-	2.2653
Egyptian	0.2839	0.2084	1.1014	0.1108	1.0698	0.0874	1.0794	441.44	-

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	14.05	14.05
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	11.60	12.36
UL Gas	142.00	142.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4308	0.15609	0.34988	31.0742
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.43968	0.15926	0.357	31.7058
KW Dinar	3.3613	5.42594	1.96818	4.40723	391.389
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.28266	1.55159	3.47826	308.928
CY Pound	2.0889	3.3683	1.22	2.7363	242.811

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	299.25	299.75
Silver (oz's)	4.89	4.92
Platinum (oz's)	342.5	344.5
AL (3 Months)	1369	1362
CU (3 Months)	1623	1627
Zinc (3 Months)	967	962
Lead (3 Months)	498	503
Ni (3 Months)	3875	3895

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period	1 - 3 Months	3 - 6 Months	6 - 12 Months	1 - 5 Years
USD	5.4077	5.3433	5.1572	4.9081
GBP	7.4270	7.2725	7.0622	6.7881
JPY	0.3378	0.4014	0.4545	0.5027
DEM	3.5000	3.5933	3.5619	3.5000
FRF	3.5000	1.3258	1.4039	1.5000
CHF	1.2002	3.5605	3.5410	3.5195
ITL	4.9360	4.6460	4.1440	-

Main Equity Indices

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	PrCts
New York	DOW JONES	8299.36	330.68	4.15	8347.75	7920.12	7968.78
New York	S&P 500	1047.49	41.96	4.17	1053.09	1000.12	1005.53
London	FT-SE 100	5056.3	17.9	0.36	5125.6	5011	5038.4
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	13168.16	162.81	1.25	13273	13109.3	12995.4
Paris	CAC 40	3362.26	1.22	0.04	3422.45	3323.39	3361.04
Frankfurt	DAX	4399.05	80.63	1.86	4435.32	4320.64	4318.52

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	106.75	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1963	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	222.7	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	124	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	24.81	Spot
Tea (c/lbs)	126	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	395	Spot

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.2096	1.2166
DE Mark	0.4329	0.4351
CH Franc	0.5323	0.535
FR Franc	0.1292	0.1298
JP Yen	0.6968	0.6998
NL Guilder	0.3838	0.3867
IT Lira	0.4374	0.4395

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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Russia calls for greater foreign bank role

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia has invited foreign banks to play a role in reviving its paralysed economy by stepping up their involvement in the crippled domestic banking system.

Warning that some domestic banks would go under as a result of the financial crisis, Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov said that his gov-

ernment realised that foreign banks had to be permitted to take a greater stake in the Russian economy to help it pull through.

"We cannot get by without widening the activity of foreign banks in Russia, without increasing the share of foreign capital in the assets of Russian banks," Primakov said in comments broadcast on Russian television.



THE AMMAN MARRIOTT HOTEL hosted a special episode of 'Wa' at Al Farah, a children's television programme. The episode was dedicated to the SOS village and was called "From children to children."

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50% of the ticket sales was donated by the Amman Marriott to the SOS Children's Village Association of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

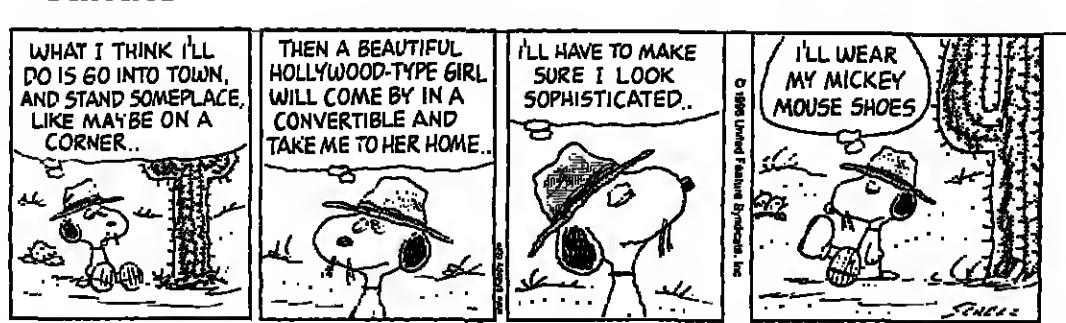
ACROSS

- Pound to a pulp
- Glowing embers
- Look with a pin
- Singer Fitzgerald
- Excessive
- "Do ... others as ..."
- Musical or Laurel
- The Toastmaster
- Fenway Park
- Continent
- Tallow base
- Some carnival performers
- The Kennedy Connection
- Gives off
- Literary device
- Money manager: abbr.
- Moral misjudgments
- Isolated
- Rain cats and dogs
- Makes an effort
- Meal prayer
- Angry gaze
- The Chairman of the Board
- Communication services
- Ash or ice follower?
- Sap of energy
- Slanting type
- "Candy Man" singer
- U2 singer
- Pinnacle
- Tee shot
- Propel in a high arc
- End of a spin?
- Closets
- Baseball's slaughter

DOWN

- Interlock
- Counterfeiter
- Louver
- Phone parts
- Stick weapon
- Individual
- West or Sandler
- Goddess of the moon
- Large truck, briefly
- Threw baseball
- Pillars
- Skunk indicator
- Little lakes
- Furious
- "Yours, Mine, and ..."
- Hong Kong tycoon
- Annoying one
- Abu Dhabi
- Illy-tasty
- and ruin
- Canadian prov.
- Checked garment?
- Run smoothly
- Region
- Football coach
- Paragon
- Still hittable on the links
- Flicking the ...
- Scarlett's home
- Insect pest
- More forceful
- Garden blooms
- Tablelands
- Make into law
- "Philadelphia" director
- Tacks on
- Crazy bird?
- Scuttled
- Small beds
- ... been had!

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I have a right to breathe clean air. I'm tired of inhaling secondhand egg salad!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HANEN

TADUN

MEEPID

SIFOSY

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: OCTET AMUSE PROTHY UNSAID

Answer: What a "bright" student might wear to an interview — A "SMART" OUTFIT

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Investments increased by 58 per cent over '97 and exceeded the '98 target by 2.2 per cent

SINCE THE beginning of this year and until Oct. 14, 1998, a total of 178 projects carrying around JD430 million in investment volume benefited from the privileges and incentives specified in the investment promotion law issued in 1995. A total of 137 projects with investments at JD271.3 million took advantage of the law during the same period of last year. Investment Promotion Corporation Director General Muntasser Ogleh said in a press statement. Ogleh indicated that the volume of investments this year was an increase of 58 per cent over the 1997 period and was 2.2 per cent above the amount targeted for 1998.

In other sectors, 11 agricultural projects accounted for eight per cent of total investment with a share amounting to JD20.2 million. Six hospital projects had about JD35 million in total investments accounted for 15 per cent of the overall investments. Both the agricultural and hospital projects took one per cent and two per cent respectively of the total investments during 1997.

Two transport projects (maritime and railways) with an investment of around JD14.5 million represented six per cent (two per cent in 1997).

Ogleh pointed out that foreign participation in these projects amounted to about JD82.5 million, representing 34 per cent of the overall investments in "new" projects. The foreign investment share was almost the same as in 1997.

EL-Zay company reports JD1.18 m profit

THE GENERAL assembly of the El-Zay Ready Wear Manufacturing Company has approved transferring JD0.7 million of net profits to retained earnings and a total of JD0.4 million to various reserves. According to the balance sheet at the end of June 1998, the company posted JD1.18 million profit of which JD174,000 were retained earnings from 1996.

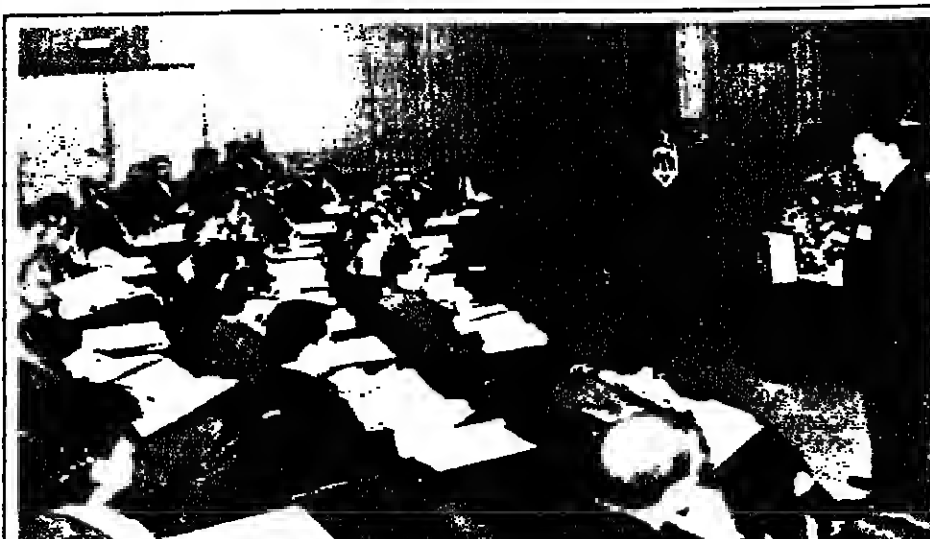
During the period, sales reached JD12 million compared to JD5 million in 1996. Total liabilities rose from JD13 million to JD17.2 million and total shareholders' equity increased from JD9.4 million to JD10.4 million. Current assets totalled JD9.7 million.

Board chairman Nadi Mousher told the general assembly that sales increased by 131 per cent, exports by 147 per cent and local sales by 101 per cent. The rise in profit was 471 per cent over the previous year, the chairman concluded (Al Ra'i).

ACI to push for more exports to Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Iraqi business groups opened meetings in Amman Saturday designed to increase the volume of Jordanian goods exported to Iraq within the oil-for-food accord approved by the U.N. Sanctions Committee. Khaldoun Abu Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) expressed dismay that Jordan's share of goods exported to Iraq has lately declined. He said the chamber will do whatever it can to boost exports to the Iraqi markets. He said that the chamber has prepared a working paper which outlines the mechanism and timetable for expanding trade and increasing Jordan's imports of Iraqi goods including sulphur, maize, barley and dates.

Abu Hassan said that Jordan has been careful to maintain its participation in the annual Baghdad International Fair and will take part in this year's fair which is due to open by the beginning of November. The head of the Iraqi team to the talks, Hameed Abdul Rasheed, reassured the Jordanian business community that the Iraqi-Jordanian economic and trade cooperation will continue unabated. He said Iraq is open to the Arab world's trade but the country has special relationship with Jordan in view of the geographic and historic links between the two countries.



MEETING AT THE CENTRAL BANK: A seminar entitled "The Countdown for the Year 2000" was opened here to draw a plan with several Jordanian commercial banks to face the international computer problem in the year 2000. Deputy Governor Ahmad Mustafa called on all participants to take the required preparations in order to handle this issue before the advent of 2000. Representatives from the Central Bank of Jordan, commercial and specialised banks and other concerned companies and corporations took part in the seminar (Petra photo)

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SIDQISANI											
TELEPHONE: 5607171 / 5607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 17/10/1998											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	17.0	.96	14	270	55965	207.50	208.00	.50	+
1.920	1.500	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	22.3	4.61	10	6479	9817	1.51	1.52	.01	+
3.200	1.000	BANK OF JORDAN	2	0.00	10	71350	74968	1.08	1.05	-.03	-
6.510	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	17.7	3.57	24	12550	15062	2.80	1.80	-	-
3.450	1.700	JOR. RUMAYT BANK	1.1	0.00	1	200	340	1.70	1.70	-	-
.800	.530	JOR. GULF BANK	0.0	0.00	5	7400	4218	.57	.57	-	-
4.190	1.900	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	40.6	2.50	1	200	400	1.90	2.00	.10	+
4.910	1.650	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	16.6	0.00	11	1300	2119	1.65	1.61	-.04	-
3.680	1.350	JOR. INV. FUND	3.47	1	150	72	1.43	1.44	.01	+	+
.970	.700	BEIT AL-HAL (KAITWA)	3.4	0.00	1	200	140	.70	.70	-	-
.850	.600	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	0.0	0.00	4	2000	1300	.65	.65	-	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 271.38 %CHG: -0.17 87 101999 184401											
2.850	1.840	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	7.1	9.62	1	150	390	2.60	2.60	-	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 127.77 %CHG: 0.00 1 150 390											
2.240	1.410	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.77	14	3757	5340	1.42	1.41	-.01	-
3.850	1.950	IRBIO ELECTRICITY	11.1	5.56	4	500	903	1.90	1.80	-.10	-
1.570	1.000	KATL. PORTFOLIO	25.1	0.00	2	248800	156744	.65	.61	-.04	-
.590	.260	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	9	0.00	8	5500	1430	.26	.26	-	-
5.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. IND.	6.7	3.10	10	1700	4092	2.40	3.42	.03	+
4.750	1.030	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.4	9.90	2	550	856	1.03	1.01	-.02	-
6.350	4.700	QAR ALDAMA OV. INV.	6.1	6.86	5	800	4084	5.41	5.30	-.11	-
3.980	1.000	ARAB ALUM. IND.	12.1	14.13	1	1000	1770	1.77	1.77	-	-
1.300	.620	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	12.3	0.00	30	17150	6086	.37	.36	-.01	-
3.720	1.150	CENTRAL INVESTMENT	14.8	3.08	2	1800	3250	3.38	3.25	-.11	-
.770	.370	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	6	4500	3550	.56	.56	-	-
.540	.380	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	1250	363	.29	.29	-	-
1.300	.620	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	12.2	5.00	11	2234	3660	1.31	1.20	-.11	-
1.760	.760	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	10.3	7.93	6	500	514	1.04	1.01	-.03	-
3.090	.650	KATL. CARB. WIRE, WTAG	31.4	0.00	1	7500	5035	.67	.67	-	-
1.470	1.150	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	7.0	0.00	4	1750	648	.37	.37	-	-
1.360	.530	UNIV. MOON. IND.	9.7	9.84	6	2500	1515	.63	.62	-.01	-
.690	.370	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	12.2	5.00	11	2234	3660	1.31	1.20	-.11	-
1.450	1.200	KATL. CHLORINE	8.6	16.13	6	7300	1426	.63	.62	-.01	-
1.080	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	8.7	5.66	11	5934	6069	1.03	1.03	-	-
1.310	.910	INTL. TOBACCO	7.2	7.95	8	34450	31409	.87	.88	.01	+
.890	.660	JORDAN STEEL	12.2	0.00	1	1500	970	.65	.65	-	-
.730	.580	NAT. ALUMINIUM	9.4	0.00	5	4000	2085	.52	.52	-	-
.670	.520	MIO. EAST COMPLEX	9.4	0.00	5	4000	2085	.52	.52	-	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 72.50 %CHG: -0.39 135 93688 103929											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 164.00 %CHG: +0.03 363 461076 464987											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 17/10/1998											
1.000	.700	JOR. INT. INSURANCE CO	0.00	0.00	1	1000	930	.98	.93	-.05	-
.790	.500	UNION INV.	0.00	0.00	5	14350	27063	.63	.53	-.10	-
.620	.230	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	0.00	0.00	13	18500	4315	.34	.23	-.11	-
.600	.270	ARAB FOOD & HED.	0.00	0.00	5	3084	626	.32	.30	-.02	-
.430	.200	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	24.2	0.00	5	250	53	.22	.21	-.01	-
.580	.230	KATL. WIRE, WTAG	0.00	0.00	26	107950	25379	.53	.52	-.01	-
.690	.520	MID-EAST PHARM. 901	2	0.00	6	1750	708	.43	.42	-.01	-
2.150	1.100	UNION TOBACCO 87.57	13.4	5.95	14	100203	192898	2.12	3.10	.02	+
.720	.570	NAT. PHARM.	8	0.00	3	4450	2581	.99	.96	-.01	-
.330	.190	INDS. ENG.	0.00	0.00	3	1400	646	.19	.19	-	-
.680	.330	INDS. CERAMIC	6.4	0.00	4	2400	768	.33	.32	-.01	-
.460	.160	TEXTILE HANDY.	9	0.00	4	2400	416	.16	.16	-	-
.950	.540	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	15	22177	12021	.55	.55	-	-
.500	.280	PEARL SAN. P. CORV.	2	0.00	1	500	135	.28	.27	-.01	-
.950	.320	OFFICIALS HEARING CO.	9	0.00	1	200	68	.32	.34	.02	+
1.310	.730	NUTRILAB	9	0.00	5	642	455	.73	.71	-.02	-
GRAND TOTAL 110 31956 268860											
* New 12 months low											
* Stock dividend during the past 12 months											
* Listed during the past 12 months											
* P/E ratio is 100 or more											
* Negative P/E											
* Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Uranus is now in Aquarius. For the past few months, it's been stirring things up in the area of friendship for you. You've been running into old friends and reestablishing old relationships. Well, now Uranus is going direct, so you'll be making new friends for the next several months, starting today. This ought to be fun.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Looks like you're having a great time again today, possibly a work party. It's fun and it's exciting, and you're having a good conversation while you're at it, all in the area of work. Whatever it is, relax and enjoy it. Looks like you're getting quite a lot accomplished.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) It's a wonderful day to entertain company, especially the most important person in your life. A wonderful time will be had by all, especially if you've done your homework and you have the place ready by now. He or she will never know how much time it took you, and nobody will ever tell.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Today is best for staying at home and having family come to you. That could work out rather well. Looks like a fascinating conversation could develop. You might hear insider information, pointing to a good investment or securing you the advantage you need to make an excellent deal. So keep your ears open.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Something that has been causing complications in your partnership is about to dissolve. You'll be able to understand the other person much better. Amazing how this happens. Being in a relationship is a constant learning process, actually, and you guys are finally starting to communicate. Congratulations!

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You've worked hard most of your life, probably without asking for anything. You just give, give, give, at least most of the time. Today, you can do a little taking. If nobody's offering what you want, do something else that's almost as rare for a Virgo. Spend some money on yourself; get a really neat thing you've always wanted.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're stronger, but less decisive than usual. Instead of constantly reviewing the

options, let your heart lead you on the right path. New skills matched with intuition serve you well. Love and work are linked, if you're serving a kind master. If not, make that change soon. Don't waste time on a jerk!

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You're outnumbered today, so keep a low profile. This isn't really a battle, it's just that you have to follow someone else's plan. You may even have plans of your own for today, but that's OK. Just hold off on them for now. You'll know when the time is right. Meanwhile, go along with the other person's program.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're probably inundated with invitations. Everybody wants you to come over and play. You'd love to do, but how can you be in three or four places at the same time? Well, you won't have to. With just a little planning and a couple of phone calls, you can set up a great party. Your friends will love to help.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Looks like you want to buy something, and a friend is ready to sell. Make an outrageous offer and you might just succeed. The other person may not value this item anywhere near as much as you do, so your rock-bottom offer could look good. That same theme goes for any kind of negotiations, by the way.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Travel is definitely your theme today. Love and travel are linked. If you don't already have a sweetheart, you might find the perfect person in your travels. Be sure to go to a place you like; then you'll know the two of you already have at least one thing in common.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The emphasis is on jointly held finances. If you and your sweetheart went shopping yesterday, you probably dipped into your reserves already. Well, you can fix things now. Get your savings back in shape by refusing to buy something you don't need. Don't go out and buy something another person doesn't need, either.

Birthstone of September: Opal — Tourmaline

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Romanian Irina Spîrlea

Davenport to face Williams in Zurich final

ZURICH (AFP) — Top-seeded Lindsay Davenport and second-seeded Venus Williams both scored straight sets victories on Saturday to set up an all-American final in the European Championships here.

Newly-crowned World No. 1 Davenport was in fine form as she beat unseeded Romanian Irina Spîrlea 6-2, 6-3 in less than an hour.

Davenport served and volleyed impressively against an opponent who rarely managed to find her rhythm.

Teenager Williams won a battle between youth and experience when she downed fourth-seeded French player Nathalie Tauziat in the second semi-final.

Despite taking the lead in the second set, Tauziat, celebrating her 31st birthday, was unable to match Williams for either power or consistency.

Tauziat made 27 unforced errors as Williams triumphed 6-3, 6-4.

In the quarterfinals, Williams had wasted several break points but still ran out an easy 6-4, 6-1 winner over Mary Pierce of France in the quarter-finals of the \$926,250 WTA European championships.

Davenport literally ran over Amanda Coetzer of South Africa displaying all the powerful serving and groundstrokes that has seen her capture the No. 1, while Romania's Irina Spîrlea took advantage of Dominique Van Roost's abdominal injury to also go through in straight sets.

Zidane ready to quit Juventus

TURIN (AFP) — Frenchman Zinedine Zidane, rated as the world's best midfielder, has warned Juventus that he might quit the Italian champions.

Zidane, who guided the hosts to victory at France 98, feels bitter and betrayed by people here in Turin after a mixed run of form. Previously wooed by Manchester United, he is ready to ditch a contract he has here until 2003.

"I've been through a very difficult time which I think is finally coming to an end," said the 26-year-old.

"I played fairly well against Russia and Andorra for the national side and although I'm not yet at my best, I'm getting there."

"I haven't been concerned about it, because people in the game have told me not to worry. That after a year as hard as the last one — and not just because of the World Cup — it's only usual to be a bit behind in the new season."

But he went on: "There are people here who are always there to give me a pat on the back and to make compliments when things are going well. But during the hard times, like the ones I've just been through, they disappear."

"They disappear into the void, into the world of silence. Before I didn't under-

stand what they were really like. Now, after what's happened, I do know."

Zidane cleared his teammates of any blame and would not identify the target of his attack, though the Italian press pointed the finger at the club's owner and honorary president, Fiat baron Giovanni Agnelli.

He simply warned the club: "It could be that I leave Juventus before the contract expires. I don't even remember if that's in 2003 or 2004."

"But it doesn't make much difference because I will almost certainly not be respecting it."

"Let me make one thing clear — at the moment, I am here, with Juventus, and I'm happy about that. But who knows if I will be here next season? After four or five years with the club I might just realise that that's enough and that it's time to go," he told the Turin-based paper, L'Espresso.

Zidane joined Juventus in the summer of 1996, after reaching the UEFA Cup final with Bordeaux, and went on to win two league titles but lose two consecutive European Cup finals with the Italian giants.

Schmeichel doubtful for Brondby match

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Manchester United's Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel said on Friday that he was not certain he would be fit for the English Premiership side's Champions League match with Brondby next Wednesday.

The 34-year-old, whose place as number one choice with the English giants is said to be under threat with them poised to sign Mark Schwarzer from Middlesbrough, said he had not been able to kick a ball since picking up a stomach muscle injury a fortnight ago.

"I still haven't kicked a ball as I've been taking things slowly for the past 14 days so I wouldn't aggravate the injury," Schmeichel told Danish newspaper B.T.

"However, I can assure you that I will not play in a match if I am not 100 per cent fit," he added.

Schmeichel, who played in

all of Denmark's matches on their way to a 3-2 defeat by Brazil in the World Cup quarter-finals, recalled he had made an error of judgement when he suffered an injury last season.

"I wanted to play in all the big matches for Manchester United and for Denmark in the World Cup," he said.

"I forced myself through it but my body paid the price," he added.

The blond 'keeper admitted that he had been personally hurt by the British tabloid press, who claim he is finished because of this new injury.

"I have decided never to speak to the English press again because they write what they want. I am sorry that they don't realise that footballers are also human beings and have their own weaknesses," he said.

"We are not machines who need a little oil to get going again," he added.

Hoddle, Shearer deny argument story

LONDON (AP) — England coach Glenn Hoddle Saturday condemned as "a vicious lie" a newspaper report that team captain Alan Shearer led a players' mutiny against him after Wednesday's European Championship game against Luxembourg.

According to the Sun tabloid, Shearer questioned Hoddle's own performance as coach after the players had been asked why they had played with so little passion in the 3-0 victory in Luxembourg.

"Have you thought it could be you?" Shearer is reported to have told Hoddle.

Both Hoddle and Shearer reacted Saturday by saying there was no such confrontation between the two although it was admitted there was a heated debate among the players about the disappointing performance.

"The story is nonsense," Shearer said. "There was a discussion in the dressing room after the game but I'm not prepared to say what was said."

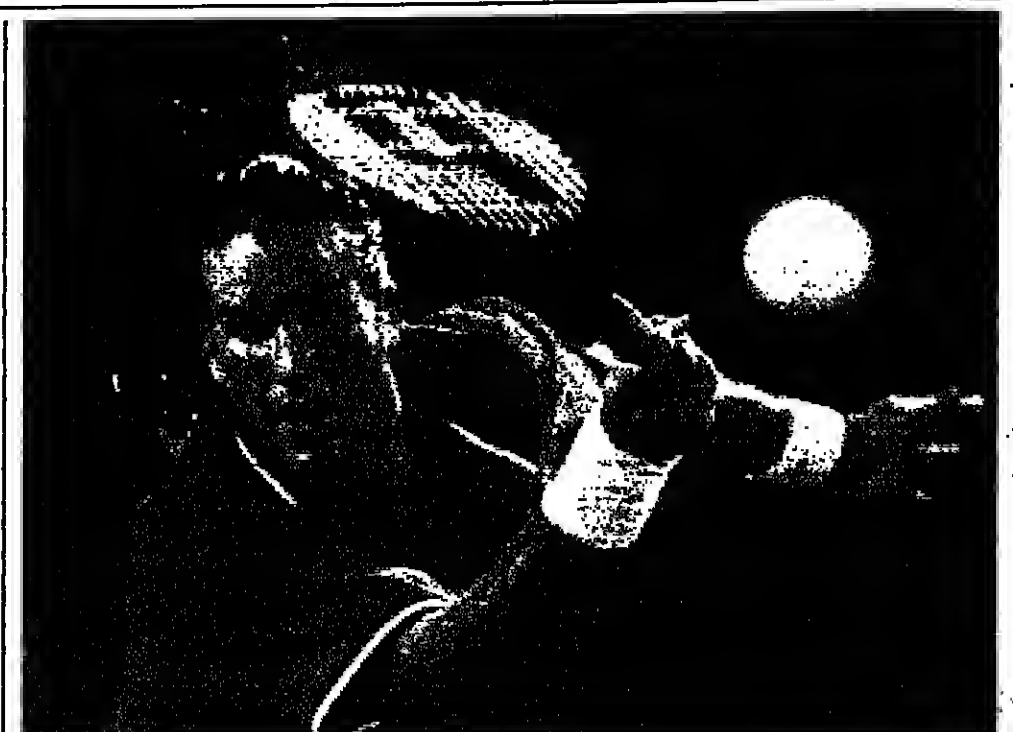
"I believe that dressing room conversations are and should remain private. But I never used the words that appeared on the front page of the newspaper today."

Hoddle condemned the Sun story.

"Today's story about what happened in the England dressing room in Luxembourg is a vicious lie. I can only guess at why anybody should write it," the England coach said.

"We weren't particularly happy with our second-half performance and the discussions you have, they go on time and time again."

"In every dressing room this afternoon at quarter to five there'll be heated moments, there'll be some good discussions, there'll be some feedback from players, and that's exactly what it was."



Pat Rafter

Sampras moves into Vienna final

VIENNA (AFP) — Resurgent Pete Sampras beat fellow American Todd Martin in straight sets on Saturday to advance to the final of the Vienna Trophy here.

World No. 1 Sampras, who has rediscovered his touch after a brief slump, downed unseeded Martin 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) and will meet fifth-seeded Slovak Karol Kucera in Sunday afternoon's final of the \$800,000 ATP Tour event.

Martin made several errors in the first set, virtually handing it to Sampras, although he led 6-5 in the second set before Sampras forced and won the tiebreaker.

"I served well and lifted

my game when I needed to in the tiebreaker," Sampras said.

Kucera reached his fourth final of the year when he beat Britain's Greg Rusedski 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 in the second semi.

The contest between the World No. 6 and left-hander Rusedski, who came into the tournament ranked 14th, was a thriller.

Rusedski, who beat World No. 2 Pat Rafter in the earlier round, led 4-1 in the first set but Kucera then won three straight games to come back to 4-4.

Kucera then had to save a set point in the tiebreaker, rallying from 5-6 down to win it 8-6.

Rusedski, who showed

flashes of anger in the second set, led 3-2 with a break but failed to take advantage. Kucera broke straight back to 3-3 then held to love for 4-3.

Rusedski, struggling to keep his emotions under control, then took a toilet break and held serve for 4-4. Kucera, however, would not be denied and won the final two games to seal a marathon win after a match of the highest quality in which both men served and returned impressively.

Rusedski failed to match his performance of last year when he made final before losing to Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic.

Progress? NBA open to union proposal

NEW YORK (AP) — In one of the first signs of possible progress in the National Basketball Association lock-out, owners agreed Friday to accept the union's concept of a luxury tax on some contracts to see if such a system will slow salary growth.

"We are willing to try it the union's way, but they have to agree that if it doesn't work, we then have to try it our way," deputy commissioner Russ Granik said.

The league asked for a two-year trial, with higher tax rates and a lower threshold than the union had proposed. A hard salary cap would kick in for the 2000-01 season if the percentage of league revenue devoted to salaries failed to drop from 57 per cent to 52 per cent.

Despite the apparent movement on the part of the owners, the union responded negatively.

"It appears at a quick glance to be a step backward ... more onerous than the proposal we received from them Sept. 24," union director Billy Hunter said. "It may be disguised in terms of a tax, but it is in fact a hard cap."

According to the league's projections, the tax would have no impact on 85 per cent of

future player contracts. But Hunter claimed it would be a tax on all contracts, not just "Larry Bird exception" contracts as the league said, and would cause 90-95 per cent of the players to accept the league minimum salary.

The Bird rule allows teams to exceed the salary cap to retain their own free agents.

"Our intent was to address the concern of the superstar contracts, like the Kevin Garnett contract that everyone points to. The tax they've come back with impacts the entire system," Hunter said.

The league's proposal calls for a tax to be levied on any contract signed under the Bird exception for more than \$2.6 million, which was the average salary in the 1997-98 season.

The tax would be paid by owners, with the revenue redistributed to low-revenue teams. In theory, it would deter teams from signing overly lucrative contracts.

The tax rate would be 50 per cent of the amount over \$2.6 million for all contracts worth up to \$10 million annually.

For contracts worth between \$10 million and \$15 million, the tax would be 100 per cent; between \$15 million and \$20 million, 150 per cent; and for

contracts worth more than \$20 million, 200 per cent, Granik said.

The league also included an exemption for any player who accepts a Bird contract with a 5 per cent raise. Such a rule would allow the Chicago Bulls to re-sign Michael Jordan for about \$36 million next season without having to pay any tax.

The NBA has already canceled the first two weeks of the season, 99 games. More games will be lost if the sides can't reach agreement soon. The only day available for bargaining next week is Tuesday, since the sides expect to receive an arbitration ruling from John Feerick on Monday and the union's hierarchy will leave Wednesday for a player meeting in Las Vegas.

Under the union's tax proposal presented to the owners Tuesday, a 50 per cent tax would be levied on any Bird contract worth more than \$18 million annually.

"The proposal made by the union would have resulted in a tax on only two of the approximately 400 contracts in effect last season," Granik said. "We analysed it every which way, and like the union's other proposals, it would have increased — not decreased — the per-

centage of league revenue paid to players."

"However, in the spirit of compromise we have attempted to fashion a system that uses a tax, instead of a hard salary cap, even though we're skeptical about the ability of any tax system to keep player salaries at a set percentage of league revenue," Granik said.

With both sides proposing systems with a tax, they may have found a mechanism that will get them to the middle ground on the main economic issue. Still, a host of other topics must be resolved before a collective bargaining agreement could be put up for a ratification vote.

Granik said it will take about a week to settle the rest of the issues after the sides agree to a new economic system.

There was no decision Friday from Feerick on the issue of whether players with guaranteed contracts must be paid during the lockout.

Feerick's decision is due Sunday, although Hunter said it would come at 3 p.m. Monday.



Todd Martin from the USA returns a ball to his compatriot Pete Sampras during their semi-final match at the Austrian Indoors Open (Reuters photo)

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hisem Yares
	Kevin Sorbo .. in KULL THE CONQUEROR Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Bruce Willis .. in LAST MAN STANDING Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNI- VERSITY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "I" NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "I" UP CLOSE & PER- SONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNI- VERSITY Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Harrison Ford ... in SIX DAYS SEVEN NIGHTS Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Watch out for the new play

Algerian rebels kill 4 teenagers

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Islamists cut the throats of four teenagers in an Algerian village overnight, government security forces said on Saturday.

The security forces said in a statement carried by the official Algerian news agency APS that the killing took place at Oued Hamama hamlet in Ain Defla area, 110 kilometres southwest of Algiers.

They blamed Islamists for the killing, but gave no further information. Massacres of civilians have become a common feature of Algeria's six-year-old civil strife.

Thousands of people, mainly poor villagers, have died in the past 18 months in similar mass killings.

Earlier, a national daily said Islamists killed seven soldiers and wounded several others in an ambush amid a huge military operation against rebels.

The soldiers, wearing civil clothes, were travelling on Wednesday on a day's leave to Ain Touta town, 320 kilometres southeast of Algiers, when rebels ambushed their van, Al Khabar daily said.

"Several others were also wounded in the ambush," it said, adding that the attackers fled into nearby woods.

Algerian newspapers have said recently that Islamists had stepped up attacks on government forces in northeastern Algeria in the past few weeks.

They said more than 30

soldiers and an unspecified number of policemen were killed in these attacks, most of which took place near Sidi Ali Bounab forest, 90 kilometres east of Algiers, where the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA) has had a base since early 1994.

The area where the operation took place was under the command of Hassan Hattab, a leader of Armed Islamic Group (GIA), who was among those killed, the La Nouvelle Republique newspaper said.

Hattab's death has been reported at least twice before.

Security forces repeatedly shelled and bombed the area allegedly used by the GIA group between Bourmedes and Tizi-Ouzou east of Algiers, the capital.

At least 30 Islamists of the GIA were killed in the operation, La Nouvelle Republique reported.

The Quotidien d'Oran newspaper said a dozen helicopters had bombed the area with "great intensity."

Both the military and Muslim activists have stepped up their attacks in recent weeks in this petroleum-rich North African nation as Algeria prepares for early presidential elections in February.

More than 65,000 people have been killed in Algeria's violence sparked early in 1992 by the cancellation of general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead, according to Western estimates.



Two unidentified Algerian residents read newspapers in a bookshop on Saturday. The four independent daily newspapers Al Watan, Le Matin, Le Soir d'Algerie and La Tribune did not appear on Saturday because of a debt payment row with the government-owned printing presses SIMPRAL and SIA. Other daily papers will also be on strike on Sunday in support of the independent publications (Reuters photo)

Debt row stops Algeria's main newspapers

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's four main independent newspapers failed to appear on Saturday after government-owned presses refused to print them because of unpaid debts.

But editors insisted that Al Watan, Le Matin, Le Soir d'Algerie and La Tribune had been kept off newsstands in retaliation for reports alleging that high-profile government figures had been involved in corruption and malpractice.

"Officials at the printing

presses told us at short notice that they would not print the papers if we did not pay debts owed to them," said one editor, who preferred not to be named.

"Of course no one could pay back the debts at short notice."

Why have they moved now to claim these debts? It was not clear how much money was involved or when the papers might appear again.

The national daily Al

Khabar said the editors and journalists saw the move as "an attempt by the government to muzzle independent newspapers and a reprisal for reports on scandals involving several senior officials."

The four dailies had all given front-page coverage to allegations made by a former security official of corruption and brutality involving President Liamine Zeroual's top adviser and preferred successor Mohammad Betchine.

Betchine says the allegations are unproved and are

part of a plot to discredit him ahead of a presidential election in February.

Editors say the government uses its monopoly of the printing for censorship, citing the case of the independent La Nation which was shut down two years ago because of unpaid debts.

A similar row with the presses shut the main independent dailies for three days in June 1996.

The government insists that the stoppages are purely for commercial reasons.

Hundreds of Palestinians rally for prisoner releases

RAMALLAH (AP) — About 400 Palestinians, some waving large pictures of jailed family members, rallied Saturday for the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

A small group of demonstrators broke away and threw stones at Israeli soldiers on the outskirts of the West Bank town of Ramallah, and the troops responded with a few rounds of tear gas and rubber bullets. However, no injuries were reported.

Palestinian police dispersed the protesters.

It was the second day of unrest in or near Ramallah. On Friday, Jewish settlers had blocked the West Bank's main north-south highway outside the town, complaining of two of their security officers were detained and roughed up by Palestinian police.

Palestinian security officials confirmed the two settler guards were briefly held Thursday, but denied any ill treatment.

The prisoner-release rally coincided with a U.S. peace summit at the Maryland retreat of Wye Plantation, at which Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have been trying to reach an agreement on an Israeli troop pullback from the West Bank and Palestinian security measures.

One issue on the table is the release of 3,000 Palestinians held by Israel for security offences. The Palestinian official who has been trying to negotiate prisoner releases accompanied Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to the U.S. talks.

In other developments Saturday: — Palestinians living near the Jewish settlement of Itzhar, near the northern West Bank city of Nablus, said about five settlers ramaged through their olive groves, beating villagers.

One Palestinian was hit in the head with a farm tool and was taken to the hospital for stitches, then

released.

Itzhar settlers have a long history of clashes with Palestinians living in surrounding villages. Three months ago, a pair of settlers were shot dead in an ambush as they patrolled the settlement's perimeter.

About 250 demonstrators marched in Gaza City to demand the release of Palestinian detainees held in Israeli jails. They presented a letter at the United Nations office asking the U.N. secretary-general to look into the question of detainees.

Police broke up a demonstration of several dozen ultra-Orthodox Jews as they attempted to block off a downtown Jerusalem street. The demonstrators, who threw glass bottles and stones towards the policemen, were protesting the presence of a restaurant on the street which remains open on the Jewish Sabbath, Israel Radio reported. There were no injuries.

Turkish police detain hundreds of pro-Kurdish party members

ISTANBUL (AP) — Police on Saturday detained hundreds of members of a pro-Kurdish party who were urging the government to join a Kurdish rebel ceasefire, a party official said.

The government rejected the truce declared by the Kurdish rebels on Sept. 1 and called on the guerrillas to surrender. The insurgents have been fighting for autonomy in the south-east since 1984 in a war that has claimed 37,000 lives.

"The first step toward an end in this war is to silence the guns," Hamit Geylani, general secretary of the

pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP), told the Associated Press.

"Our members were to call on the government to take a positive step." The semi-official Anatolia news agency said the riot police stopped 10 passenger buses carrying HADEP members to downtown Taksim Square and detained them before they could stage a rally.

Geylani said some 1,000 party members were detained by the police and that some 20 of them were injured by wielding police truncheons. Private NTV television put the number

of detentions at 500 people.

The Anatolia news agency confirmed that a fist-fight broke out between the police officers and the protesters but did not give any injury figure.

Also on Saturday, police detained 39 people protesting the disappearance of loved ones believed to be in police custody in Istanbul and in Aegean port city of Izmir.

Turkey's independent Human Rights Association claims more than 800 people have disappeared, most after detention by security forces.

Arab lawyers' group rejects Sudan request for membership

CAIRO (AFP) — The Union of Arab Lawyers said Saturday that a request by the Sudanese bar association to rejoin the organisation had been turned down because of its failure to "defend democracy and human rights."

In a statement, the Union of Arab Lawyers said the decision to reject the

Sudanese lawyers' petition had been taken at a Oct. 13-16 meeting of the group in Tripoli, Libya.

The Cairo-based Union of Arab Lawyers recalled that the decision to expel the Sudanese bar association had been taken after the country's Islamist government disbanded the organisation.

It added that rules governing the practice of law in Sudan had "stripped the bar of its independence, placed it under the control of the government and prevented it from defending democracy and human rights."

The union also accused the authorities of fraud in the last elections for members of the Sudanese bar association.

Government floats Disi water project

(Continued from page 1)

While the bottom line will be which of the bidders provides the lowest price per cubic metre of water, the ministry will also look at another criteria, the highest "value added" for the country, i.e., how much of the \$700 million investment will be spent locally.

The ministry will also look favourably at foreign companies who team up with a proposed local national water company, an idea that was not enthusiastically embraced by some participants, who say this should be an option but not a condition.

The capital, where almost half of the country's 4.5 million population lives, has had to bear a water rationing programme almost every summer for the last 10 years.

Already around 50 mcm from the Disi water is being used for agriculture

by four privately-owned farms free of charge under a 25-year concession agreement granted by the government in 1985. Another 14 mcm is extracted from the aquifer, which underlies 80 per cent of Saudi Arabia's territories and 90 per cent of Jordan's, for domestic use for the port city of Aqaba.

According to water experts, the aquifer is already over-exploited with an annual drop of 80-85 centimetres in the groundwater level, which is considered "very dangerous." These experts, worried about over-exploitation and pollution of the non-renewable aquifer, stress that agricultural use in the area must stop.

Of the total 900 mcm used annually, agriculture consumes the lion's share of the resources using between 600-700 mcm annually, while 240 mcm go to domestic use and 30-35 men for industry.

Uday's thesis distributed as supplement

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's elder son, Uday, has had his university thesis distributed as a supplement in a newspaper and has called for comments from the public.

The premise of 34-year-old Uday's political science thesis is that the world will no longer be dominated by one power by the turn of the century.

Uday maintains in his thesis that "the world will be multipolar in the 21st century" and that "the United States, Japan, the European Union and China will be the four world powers."

The 300-page work was distributed as a supplement to Babel, a newspaper he runs. The newspaper said it would welcome "all comments from professors, researchers, journalists and writers." Uday already has an engineering degree from Baghdad University and hopes to win a doctorate with his thesis.

He stressed that despite strong support for Israel in Congress, some influential lawmakers are determined to reduce — not boost — aid to Israel and Egypt, the two largest U.S. foreign assistance recipients.

The aide said many in Congress were suspicious that Clinton, who could not find

time to meet Netanyahu last May, was now going all out for a peace deal three weeks before mid-term U.S. elections, in which his Democratic Party badly needs a boost.

But Robert Saffoff, head of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, wrote in The New Republic magazine that U.S. aid commitments could be offered as a way to help bridge any last-minute gaps in

a deal. Former congressman Wayne Owens, now president of the Centre for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation, said new aid, including military assistance to Israel, was warranted in the context of a deal.

"But only if it is coupled with economic aid for the Palestinians," he told Reuters in a telephone interview.

The aid would help close the

Khatami opposes calls for boycott of local polls

TEHRAN (AFP) — President Mohammad Khatami Saturday criticised the disqualification of many of his supporters from standing in this week's key vote for Iran's Assembly of Experts, but opposed calls for a boycott of the poll.

"I have a complaint to make of the electoral authorities for not creating the conditions for a greater number of hopefuls to come forward," Khatami said in a televised address to the nation.

"If we show greater tolerance and allow more people to become candidates, there will be greater variety and competition, which will in turn produce more enthusiasm among voters," he said.

Only 167 of the 396 hopefuls who signed up for Friday's vote have been cleared to stand. Voters will elect 86 representatives to the assembly, a backbone of Iran's theocracy responsible for appointing or dismissing the country's "Vali-e-Faqih," or supreme leader, a position currently held by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Council of Guardians, a conservative clergy-dominated body which oversees elections in Iran, rejected most of the hopefuls, many of them Khatami supporters, for allegedly failing to meet the legal requirements to stand.

Iranian electoral law requires candidates to be fanatically religious and to have a high level of proficiency in religious matters.

Several leftist supporters of Khatami have pulled out of the election in protest at the exclusion of their allies from the race, and at least two organisations have refused to field any candidates.

But Khatami, distanced himself from the boycott calls urging an "enthusiastic presence of the people" and calling on rival factions not to seek to "settle political accounts."

"Velayat-e-Faqih is the pillar of the regime and a hallowed symbol of both democratic and Islamic aspects of the regime," said Khatami, who is Iran's second most important leader after Khamenei.

He said it was "necessary" for Iran's supreme leader to have the wide-ranging powers which the Islamic republic's constitution grants him including control of the armed forces and the judiciary, and supervision of macro-economic and political policy.

"A supreme power and a final say on matters is a necessity for the stability of a government. It will help shape political and social order," the president said.



Imran Khan and Jemima's marriage 'on the rocks'

LONDON (AFP) — The three-year-old marriage of Pakistani cricketing legend Imran Khan and Jemima, the daughter of late Franco-British tycoon Sir James Goldsmith, is in danger of breaking down, it was reported Saturday. Jemima, who is four months pregnant, spent Friday in London with the couple's two-year-old son Sulaiman, while her husband reportedly flew to United States. The rift is believed to centre on the cultural differences between the former Pakistan cricket captain and his 24-year-old wife, who converted to Islam after their marriage.

McCartney did not tell wife

LONDON (AFP) — Former Beatle Paul McCartney revealed on Saturday that he did not tell his wife Linda that she was dying from cancer, even though she had only days to live. "I knew a week or so before she died. I was the only one who knew. One of the doctors said she ought to be told, but I didn't want to tell her because I didn't think she'd want to know," he told the Daily Mail newspaper. His wife died, aged 56, in April after a long battle with breast cancer. The loss of his wife of 30 years has hit him so badly that he has sought the help of a professional counsellor. McCartney also told the newspaper.

Florida exhibit focuses on the mysteries of ancient Peru

ST. PETERSBURG (AP) — The largest exhibition of Peruvian artifacts ever displayed in the United States will open Oct. 23 at the Florida International Museum in St. Petersburg. "Empires of Mystery: The Incas, the Andes and Lost Civilisations" spans several thousand years of history, including the rituals, artistry, warfare and daily lifestyle of some of the most complex and sophisticated civilisations ever known in the Western hemisphere. Among the 300 artifacts to be displayed are three mummies, including the 1,500-year-old mummy of a sorcerer, wrapped in her hair, which is eight feet long.

An exhibit of Hemingway memorabilia is touring Spain

NEW YORK (AP) — A movable feast of Ernest Hemingway manuscripts, photos and videos is touring Spain to celebrate the American author's 100th birthday anniversary next year. Hemingway, whose novels set in Spain include "For Whom the Bells Toll" and "Death in the Afternoon," made the yearly running of the bulls in Pamplona famous around the world. The travelling exhibition began in Madrid and is in Torrevieja through Oct. 31, according to the Tourist Office of Spain in New York.

Brain implants give patients power of thought over computers

PARIS (AFP) — Scientists in the United States have successfully buried implants into the brains of two severely disabled patients enabling them to control a computer by thinking about parts of their bodies. By pointing the cursor at different icons, the patients could make the computer speak simple phrases such as "I'm thirsty" or "Please turn off the light." "If you can run a computer, you can talk to the world," Roy Bakay of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, whose team developed the implants, told Britain's New Scientist magazine. The researchers behind the breakthrough hope that the technology will eventually allow people totally paralysed to operate artificial limbs.